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# आचारकांडम्.

THE

# HINDU AT HOME.

THE

# HINDU AT HOME

BEING

## SKETCHES OF HINDU DAILY LIFE.

BY

THE REV. J. E. PADFIELD, B. D.,
*Missionary, C. M. S., Masulipatam.*

Ancestor-worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu religion.
*(Professor Bhattacharja, in Tagore Law Lecture.)*

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# PREFACE.

THE Rev. J. E. Padfield, who has been for the last twenty-seven years a Missionary in the Godavery and Kistna Districts of the Madras Presidency, has here brought together in book form a series of articles, the majority of which have been up to the present time, scattered among the monthly issues of *The Madras Christian College Magazine.* No class of European has a greater opportunity of making a close study of Native life than the Missionaries, the very nature of whose life-work, whether among the hill tribes or among the dwellers in the plains, necessitates a close communion with the Native population. Of these opportunities Mr. Padfield has taken advantage to the full, producing, as the result of his observations, an epitome of the general life and ceremonial observances of the orthodox Hindu together with some accounts of the customs of the unorthodox.

For myself, engaged as I am almost single-handed in an anthropological survey of the races, tribes and castes of Southern India, I welcome this addition to the literature bearing on what are commonly known as "manners and customs." By our cold-weather visitors I am repeatedly cross-questioned as to the significance of sect-marks, caste, and other complex matters relating to Hindu life, and for such the present book will prove an admirable traveller's companion. Not, however, to the transient visitor only, whose interest in Indian affairs

is ephemeral, will it be of use, but also to the European resident, whose ignorance in connection with all matters relating to Native life is proverbial. "Probably," as Mr. Padfield remarks with great truth, "few of the Europeans domiciled in India could give any intelligent account of the reason why the Hindu shaves his head, leaving a top-knot most carefully preserved; why he paints those marks on his forehead, or smears his body with those grey, ash-coloured marks; or again, for such social customs as perpetual widowhood, or the so great desire for a son, that one must be adopted, if nature denies the precious boon." To the majority of Europeans the wearing of a thread is probably accepted as a sign that the wearer is a Brahman, and I confess that it is not very long since I discovered that the artisan classes of Madras (Kammālans), the weavers, the Haruva sect of the Badagas of the Nilgiris, and others, don the outward symbol of the second spiritual birth.

In connection with the census, 1891, the greatest difficulty was, we are told by Mr. H. A. Stuart, the Census Commissioner, experienced in classifying the large number of entries found in the schedules, owing to the great dearth of published information regarding the castes of the Madras Presidency. "The district manuals," he says, "are particularly defective in this particular, and present a marked contrast to the Gazetteers of the sister Presidency of Bombay. An exception must, however, be made in favour of Mr. Nelson's Madura, Mr. Cox's North Arcot, and Mr. Grigg's Nilgiris. Of the rest, some contain notices of a

few castes, and others give lists of varying degrees of accuracy; but, in the majority, the subject of caste is treated in the most meagre manner, or is omitted altogether." Books there are dealing with the Native inhabitants of Southern India, such as Breeks' 'Primitive Tribes of the Nilgiris,' the Rev. S. Mateer's 'Native Life in Travancore,' 'the Tribes of the Nilgiris by the Missionary Metz,' Colonel Marshall's amusing 'Anthropologist among the Todas,' Colonel Ross King's 'Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgiris,' and Mullaly's 'Criminal Classes of the Madras Presidency.' Of these six books no less than four relate to the tribes inhabiting the Nilgiris, of whom the Todas have always attracted most attention. What opinion, I wonder, would the Todas have of European literature, did they know that a Toda mand has recently appeared as "an ancient type of dwellings discovered in the Himalayas"?

For the purpose of travellers in foreign lands a cheap, compact, and portable traveller's anthropometer is now manufactured by Aston and Mander, 25, Old Compton Street, London. Equipped with this apparatus, with a little book entitled 'Notes and Queries on Anthropology,' and with a photographic camera, the Missionary who has the confidence of the Native community could do much to advance the cause of anthropology in its relation to the inhabitants of Southern India. There are, in every district, races, tribes, and castes, concerning whose institutions, history, tradition, religion, etc., a wide field for enquiry lies open. Such an enquiry, if combined with a record of anthropometric data, would be of invaluable assistance

in the cause of the anthropological survey, and I would give a hearty greeting, and such advice as my experiences may render possible, to fellow-workers in a line of research, which is to me full of attractions.

EDGAR THURSTON.

MADRAS,
*September* 8, 1895.

# AUTHORS PREFACE.

The whole of these sketches—and it must be borne in mind that they only profess to be sketches—have appeared, with the exception of two or three chapters, from time to time in the pages of the *Madras Christian College Magazine.* It is as far back as 1885 that the first paper was written and often for long periods the whole subject has been laid aside. However great the desire for side studies may be in India, the pressure of daily work in an exhausting climate more often than not frustrates the best intentions. I have often been advised by kind friends to collect these papers and bring them out in a more permanent form than that of Magazine articles, and when I was in England in 1887-8 Sir Monier Williams and Dr. Robert Cust were both good enough to read some of the earlier chapters and favour their being thus collected. Though thus encouraged, however, it is only recently that circumstances have combined to favour the carrying into effect of this design. I am aware that there are standard works which contain a good deal of the information here given, but there are also many things here described which I trust will be found interesting of which there is no mention in any books to which I have had access. Furthermore, I am not without a hope that the popular style in which I have endeavoured to

present the subject may serve to attract the ordinary reader.

A few words may be necessary with reference to the Sanscrit quotations, of which there are a good number in these pages. I must first of all hasten to disclaim for myself any pretence to Sanscrit learning. The quotations have been provided for me, from time to time, by learned pandit friends, and we have worked out the translations largely through the medium of Telugu. In giving the English there is no attempt at a metrical translation, but it is put in the form in which it will be found so as to give the original and the translation as nearly as possible in corresponding lines. I was strongly advised to put the original as well as the translation, seeing that many of the quotations are not to be found in any published books, as far as I know, but are taken from the private palm-leaf manuscripts of Purōhitas who hand down their gathered lore as a legacy to their successors. Besides, however, the possible readers in Europe who may have a knowledge of Sanscrit and hence find the quotations interesting and perhaps useful, I am not without hope that this book may be read by educated Hindus in India itself. This is an additional reason for my action in this respect, seeing that Hindu Scholars would naturally prefer to have the original.

I trust that my efforts to present in an English dress the various songs I have quoted, will meet with that indulgence which is craved for them. It was a question of giving the songs in a crude form which although there might be a more exact renderings of the original would not be so likely to interest the ordinary reader, or

to make an attempt to present the ideas expressed in a fashion more calculated to secure attention and, perhaps, at the same time give a truer idea of the whole circumstances under description. How far this attempt has been a success I must leave to the judgment of the reader.

It should be mentioned that when Manu is quoted, it is from the English translation by Sir William Jones—Haughton edition, 1825.

As the contents of the chapters are given so fully it was felt that an alphabetical Index was not necessary.

MASULIPATAM,<br>*October 25th, 1895.* J. E. P.

# THE HINDU AT HOME.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE HINDU HOME.

### गृहम्. (Gruham.)

Let him not cease to perform day by day, according to the preceding rules the five great sacraments; and having taken a lawful consort, let him dwell in his house during the second period of his life.—Manu v. 169.

In giving some account of matters connected with the daily home life of the Hindu, it may be well to introduce the subject by a description of the home itself, and things referring thereto. At the outset it must be borne in mind that in this, as in everything else, the Hindu is guided by rules and regulations prescribed by his religion. There is nothing that has to do with the whole life of a Hindu, and every possible detail thereof, from his cradle to his grave, and even after that, which is not regulated by rules prescribed by his religion. Doubtless many of these directions were originally the outcome of circumstances bearing upon the welfare of the individual or community, but such directions have gradually become absorbed by the all-embracing religious administration, and at length appear as sections of a divine code that must be observed, on pain of severe physical and spiritual penalties.

I do not intend to say anything here of the homes of the modern Europeanized Hindu; for, in the first place, such are comparatively very few in number, and are chiefly confined to the large towns and cities; and on the other hand, they do not represent the ordinary habits and customs of the people. The orthodox Hindu looks with dislike upon the many departures from custom that are beginning to manifest themselves, particularly in the Presidency cities, and other seats of light and learning; and the hybrid

civilization we see presenting itself is certainly not so interesting a study as that of the habits and customs which, though hoary with antiquity, are still so binding upon the masses and are so universally observed, all around us, at the present day.

The subject of Hindu homes is, of conrse, a very wide one, and may include many varieties, from the miserable hut of the lowest outcaste up to the lordly dwelling of the Māharājah. The extreme poverty of the very lowest classes, the complete absence of all ideas of comfort, and the simple requirements of a tropical climate, together serve to perpetuate the primitive character, and the miserable squalor of the ordinary labourer's hut. A few jungle sticks and the leaves of any of the varieties of the palm, or a few bundles of grass or reeds, suffice, to make a covering into which the poor man and his family can creep on cold nights, or during the heavy rains; but such a place can scarcely be called a home. This class of people live mostly out of doors, both night and day; and the hut is simply a shelter from inclement weather, and a place for the safe custody of the few simple pots, and cooking utensils that form the family belongings. Of course there are infinite gradations from this primitive dwelling to the palaces of the great chiefs and kings, but, as far as I have been able to judge, after a long and varied experience, there is one thing in common about them all; from an Englishman's point of view, there seems to be an absence of that comfort, that indescribable something which is the charm of an English home, and which causes us to use the word as a synonym for the eternal happiness beyond. This may be only one's insular prejudice and the association of ideas; for, after all, comfort and happiness are but comparative terms; still this is how it has always struck me, from my own point of view. Without, however, attempting a description of either end of this long catalogue, we will take an ordinary house of the fairly well-to-do Hindu, and by giving a more or less detailed representation of that, lead the reader to form a judgment as to the whole.

Before describing the house itself, it will be best to mention some of the regulations connected with the building of it—regulations as to its site, and materials to be used in its construction, and the time for commencing the work. All these things are minutely laid down in Hindu books of greater or less antiquity. There is one book called *Nirnayasindhu* (the ocean of ritual), which is a kind of encyclopædia of all Hindu customs; and a smaller work called *Kālāmrutam* (the nectar of time), which contains the sixteen rites or regulations concerning the sixteen chief events in a man's life, from his birth to his death. From these two books a smaller one has been compiled called *Vāstu Shāstram* (the science of domestic architecture), which treats of all matters connected with buildings, especially private dwellings, and though many of the directions are not now generally complied with, most of those that are here described are still followed out, by the ordinary orthodox Hindu. There are regular professional persons called Vāstu Shāstris (doctors of building), generally of the goldsmith caste, whose business it is, for a consideration, of course, to give all the correct measurements and directions, in due accordance with ritual, to those about to erect new dwellings. I heard some time ago of a celebrated member of this profession, and sent for him, as I wished to see his books, and to generally make his acquaintance. At first the old gentleman declined to come, as he feared Europeans; he thought he might be beaten, or otherwise ill-treated! After some time, however, upon being assured that he would meet with nothing but kind treatment, he consented to come. I was pleased to see my new friend, but I did not get much out of him, as he had not brought his books. They were at his village, some ten miles away; but he promised to get them, and to tell me about his profession. He was a most respectable looking old man, and being of the goldsmith caste, he wore the thread of the *dvija* or twice born. He did not, however, keep his appointment to come by a certain day, the reason being that he was hastily summoned to a village some

distance off, on the south of the Kistna river. It appears that a certain man, who was building a new house, had fallen ill, and he sent in haste for this doctor; not a doctor for his body, be it observed, but a doctor for the house! Something must have gone wrong in the calculations, or in the dimensions, or something or other of the new building, and hence this blow from the offended deity. Money was sent to defray the expenses of this celebrated Shāstri, but he would not go until he was assured that his advice would be followed, even if it involved pulling down portions of the building already erected. How he fared in this expedition I have never heard; but it appears that sometime ago this same old gentleman was sent for to attend another case, the result of which brought him great fame. A certain house owner had recently entered a new house which he had built, but within a month he fell very ill. It was thought that something must be wrong with the building, and this house-doctor was sent for. Having considered the case, the doctor decided, by virtue of his science, that there was a snake in a certain beam of the building. The reptile had entered the hollow part of the beam, which had been plugged up by the carpenter, and was there languishing, and hence the calamity. A snake charmer was summoned, the beam was sawn through, and a reptile which turned out to be a cobra, was drawn out by the snake charmer and placed in an earthen vessel. It was there fed with milk for some ten days, until it had revived, and recovered its strength, when it was taken away to a suitable place and set free. The patient recovered his strength in proportion as the cobra's strength revived, and within a few days he was quite well. The wisdom and skill displayed by our friend in this case was much praised, and he was suitably rewarded. These simple stories are here narrated for what they are worth. The people fully believe in them, and they will serve to show the superstitious notions that are still entertained in connection with Hindu dwellings.

The first question that arises in connection with the building of a house is as to the *site*, and many direc-

tions are given as to the colour, and taste, and smell of the soil, together with the various means of testing its being a lucky or unlucky spot or neighbourhood; but much of this is, I fancy, considered obsolete now. Builders are still, however, very particular as to the position of the house with reference to a temple, and also as to the presence of human bones in the soil. If, on digging for the foundations of a new dwelling, any bit of human bone should be turned up, the greatest care is taken to discover and remove any particle that can be found; even if the site is not altogether abandoned. Perhaps it is not difficult to imagine how this idea may have originated from sanitary considerations. If, again, the owner should fall ill whilst the building is going on, and die before it is finished, the whole thing is completely abandoned, and no one would think of taking over the work with a view to completing it. A house must not be built in front of a Siva temple, as the eye of that god has an evil influence; nor must it be built behind one to Vishnu, but it may be built on either side of any one of them. A most curious fact is the apparently small thing that will cause a Hindu to desert his home, either for a longer or shorter period, and sometimes for good and all. Particulars will be given later on as to the causes for which a house may be considered unclean or unlucky, but I will here relate a peculiar case that came under my own observation, sometime ago, as it has to do with the question of the site upon which a house may be built.

Several years ago I had occasion to pass through a certain village which, I noticed, was completely deserted, and many of the houses dismantled. It was a Sudra village of well-to-do farmers. It was getting late in the forenoon, and as I had not yet breakfasted, this appeared to be a good opportunity to make a halt. The village munsiff (the village executive officer), who came up, gave me permission to pass the heat of the day in the sheltered courtyard of one of the houses that was still left standing. My frugal meal was soon despatched, and then I began to explore and to seek for information. I was informed

that, for certain religious reasons, the whole village had been abandoned, and the farmers settled on a site, which was pointed out to me, about half a mile distant from their old homes. They had pulled down their houses and utilized what they could of the old materials for rebuilding. The reason given for this was as follows. It appears that for some time there had been a great deal of sickness in the village, and many deaths, and it was decided by the Brahmins that a curse rested upon the place. On looking round for the probable cause of this, it was discovered from certain signs, or pretended to have been discovered, that there must have formerly been a temple near the village tank which was close at hand; and as there was no vestige of the temple left, it was concluded that it must have been destroyed! For this or some other reason, the anger of the particular god had been aroused, and he had cursed the village, hence the number of deaths. One can imagine the consternation this decision would cause amongst these poor superstitious people. They, however, do not seem to have questioned the decision, but simply decided that it was the will of the gods that they should remove. Accordingly, for a pecuniary consideration, the Brahmins pointed out a new site, and the simple folks began at once to remove their dwellings. At the time of my visit most of the houses had been completely dismantled, and nothing was left of them but the substantial mud walls which presented the appearance of a sad, but by no means picturesque, ruin. A few of the old inhabitants, among whom were the barber and the potter, still lingered on, probably because they had not the wherewithal to meet the expense of removing. The site upon which the old village was built was in every respect superior, from sanitary and other points of view, to the low and ill drained place to which the removal had been made, but no logic of facts can overcome the superstitious fears of these poor deluded people. Probably the real cause of the unhealthiness of the place might have been found in some of the back-yards or other surroundings. Dame Nature had been outraged by a

systematic neglect of the attention due to her fair daughter Hygeia, and punishment had resulted. Such simple matters as these, however, are beneath the ken of the Hindu wise-man, and everything must be decided in accordance with rules formulated by a dense superstition. As I sat there, during the heat of the day, in the shade of the old door way, I could not but reflect upon the scene before me. How many generations of industrious Hindu farmers had been reared in that place! Here were still the peepul tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and the neem (*Azadirachta Indica*) under whose shadow so many had sat in days gone by for council or for gossip, now left standing amidst the miserable ruins of once loved homes. Whilst I was there, an old widow woman came up from the new village, to the house thus temporarily occupied by me, and she seemed by no means pleased at my presence. I courteously explained that I had received permission, and then it turned out that the house did not belong to my friend the munsiff at all; and hence perhaps his readiness to let me rest there! However I was not disturbed, and presently the old lady began to sweep up the deserted rooms; one could not see why; there seemed no need for it; as nobody came there, and the house was only waiting to be pulled down; but perhaps her old affection for the place brought her there, and made her treat it as a sacred shrine that she could not bear to see neglected. Of course I took the opportunity kindly to point out to my village friend, the munsiff, the folly of all this expense and trouble, this breaking up of comfortable homes, all for a superstitious idea. With true native politeness he appeared to agree with what I said, but he finished off with the old Hindu excuse, "What could we do? The Brahmins said it must be done, and we were obliged to go!" We sometimes hear people talk as though superstition were dead in India; but, alas! it is not so; it is not even moribund. Except within a narrow circle, happily widening by slow degrees, still yet comparatively a very narrow one, composed of those influenced by Western ideas, superstition has just as strong a hold upon the masses

as ever. And it cannot be expected to be otherwise. If it took many many centuries to do away with old heathen superstitions in the West, some of which are not yet completely eradicated, it must not be supposed that one or two generations, or very many of them, indeed, will effect much change in the East, where the growth is so dense and so deeply rooted.

Next after the site, the position of the neighbouring dwellings must be taken into consideration, as if, for instance, the water from a house flows towards a neighbour's there will arise evil and quarrels; also in order to secure the general welfare, the water from one's own house should be made to flow in a certain direction (east, or north, or north-east). How all these conditions can be complied with, supposing a house is to be built in a crowded neighbourhood, one must leave an unsettled problem. The timber used must also be well considered, for certain kinds are sure to bring misfortune if one should be rash enough to use any one of them. A list of unsuitable timbers is given in the books on these matters. The well also must not be dug on the south side of the house, or evil will be sure to follow, and if bones are found in excavating for it, the fact will be taken as a sign of the death of the owner.

The next question is as to the time of the year at which building operations should be commenced. On this point most careful directions are given, and it may be interesting to give them here in detail. In the list, given below, the first column gives the native name of the month, and the next the corresponding English time; while the third gives the consequences that are liable to ensue to the householder from commencing to build his dwelling at the particular time named :—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Chaitram | March, April | Blessings generally. |
| 2. | Vaishākham | April, May | Wealth. |
| 3. | Jyēshtham | May, June | Deaths. |
| 4. | Āshadham | June, July | Evil to the cattle. |
| 5. | Shrāvanam | July, August | Increase of cattle. |
| 6. | Bhādrapadam | August, September | Loss of sons. |
| 7. | Āswayujam | September, October | Poverty. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | Kārteekam | October, November | Complete happiness. |
| 9. | Mārgasirām | November, December | Good crops. |
| 10. | Pushyam | December, January | Danger of fire. |
| 11. | Māgham | January, February | General success. |
| 12. | Phālgunam | February, March | Much happiness. |

The proper time for commencing the work having been decided upon, the difficulty as to the *aspect* has to be settled, and this can only be decided by the following consideration. A deity called Vāstupurusha is said to preside over the science of building. This being is said to migrate between the three worlds, *swarga* (heaven), *marthya* (this world), and *pātāla* (hell), and to be always in a reclining posture, but changing his position at different times of the year; for instance, during certain months of the year his head will be turned towards the north, and at other times towards other points of the compass. A house should not, when the building of it is commenced, face towards the feet of Vāstupurusha or where his eyes may fall upon it, from which it follows that if a certain aspect is desired, building operations must commence at a period of the year when either of the above contingencies may be avoided, owing to the position in which the deity may be then reclining.

Another thing to be considered will depend upon which side of the road or street the house site may be. According to the *Vāstu Shāstram*, it is good to build towards the north, or east, but bad, towards the south, or west. If, therefore, the house-builder should have a site large enough to enable him to comply with the *Shāstra* he will not build his house right up to the road, if it will face towards the south or west; he will in that event build some distance back from the road or street and have only a blank wall with a door in it by the road side. In towns or crowded localities where the area of sites may be limited, this point may not always be complied with, through lack of space, but, where it is feasible, and especially in country-places, where space is not so valuable, I fancy this rule of the *Shāstram* is generally attended to.

The aspect of the new house, and the proper time for the commencement of operations having been duly fixed upon, the next thing is the excavations for the foundations, and the performing of a ceremony somewhat analogous to that of laying the foundation stone of a public building in Europe. A good time of the day having been fixed upon by astrology, the owner of the house, together with his wife, who must be present, and the *purōhita* or family priest, and any others, assemble for the foundation-laying ceremony. After worshipping Ganesha, without propitiating whom nothing of importance can ever be undertaken, a piece of stick called *shankhu,* about a foot long, which has been cut into a certain prescribed shape by the carpenter, is planted in the north-east corner of the foundation of the main building. Into the place where this is planted, various kinds of grain, and metals, are thrown, together with flowers, and leaves, and coloured rice, and the whole is then worshipped. This coloured rice (*akshata*) enters largely into all religious ceremonies. In fact, no worship, other than that at funerals, or that in any way, connected with the dead can be performed without this coloured rice being used. It is coloured red with a mixture of turmeric and slaked lime in water. The idea appears to be that the stick, by this ceremony (*pratishta*), becomes animated with the spirit of the god Vāstupurusha, who is thereafter the good genius of the house. At this ceremony the following slokams among others are repeated :—

1. शंकुदेव नमस्तेस्तु
   दृढखादिरनिर्मित ।
   गन्धपुष्पाक्षतैर्युक्त
   वास्तुशास्त्रविनिर्मित ॥

2. त्वदाधारं गृहस्थानं
   श्रीकरं देवनिर्मितं ।

त्वद्विना गृहनिर्माणं
न कर्तव्यं शुभेच्छुभिः ।
प्रीतोऽस्मिन् स्थापितो नित्यं
गृहसौख्यं विवर्धय ॥

1. O Thou Shanku god, we adore thee.
   Thou art formed of hard khadiri wood.
   Thou art decorated with sandal, flowers, and coloured rice.
   Thou art made according to the Vāstu-Shāstram.

2. Thou art the stay of the dwelling;
   Art by God appointed, and givest prosperity.
   Without thee the building of a dwelling
   Should not be done by those who desire happiness.
   Do thou, being established in this Shanku.
   The good of this house ever increase.

At the putting up of the main doorway, and again when the ridge-piece is put up, religious ceremonies are performed; as also at the digging of the well, and when the family first take possession. These ceremonies will now be described in due order.

The principal entrance to the house, the front door, is called *simhadwāram* (the lion entrance). The woodwork of this is always more or less carved, sometimes most elaborately so. There are two cross pieces laid across the top corners of the door frame. These pieces are not used in English buildings, therefore there is no English name for them. They are called the horse-stools, because upon them are laid the cross pieces which support the wall above. This is instead of an arch, and it must be borne in mind that, until recent years, most of the walls were built with mud, or with sun dried bricks. These two cross pieces are always carved into some shape or other, to represent lions, elephants, horses or parrots, according to the fancy of the owner. The putting up of this entrance door frame is always a serious business, and necessitates a religious ceremony. The woodwork is smeared with saffron, and adorned with red powder

(*kunkuma*), and flowers, besides a kind of garland made of leaves of the mango tree. As *Kunkuma* is much used in worship, and in all kinds of Hindu ceremonies, in which women are associated, it may be as well to mention here that it is a red powder made of turmeric, alum, and lime juice. Worship is then actually performed to the wood by repeating certain prayers, and sprinkling it with sandal paste and coloured rice. The following are specimens of slokams or prayers on such occasions:

1. द्वारशाखाः सुसंबद्धा
वास्तुशास्त्रविधानतः ।
गृहेऽस्मिन् सुस्थिरा यूयं
स्थित्वासौख्यं विवर्धत ॥

2. हरिद्राकुङ्कुमैः पुष्पैः
चंदनैरभिपूजिताः ।
चिरकालं सुखं स्थित्वा
अस्मान्पालयतानिशं ॥

3. एवं संस्थाप्य द्वाराणि
नमस्कारप्रदक्षिणैः ।
गृहसौख्यमवाप्नोति
आयुष्यारोग्यमुत्तमं ॥

1. O door frame, with parts fitted tightly together,
According to Vâstushâstra rule.
Do thou, being fixed in this house,
Cause happiness to increase.

2. With saffron, turmeric, flowers,
And sandal being well adored,
Do thou for ever be happy
And be our support and stay.

3. Thus having fixed the door frame
With clasped hands and circumambulations,
Home happiness he (the householder) will receive,
With long life and good health.

The next religious ceremony takes place when the ridge-plate is put into position; this too being worshipped in much the same way as the door frame. Whilst lying upon the ground, across two pieces of timber, it is adorned with saffron, and flowers, and garlands, and worship is done to it, after which it is put into position. The following are specimens of the prayers used;—

1. गृहाधाराः पृष्ठशाखाः
पूजिताः पुष्पचंदनैः ।
स्थापिता वास्तुशास्त्रोक्तम्
सुखं कुरुत शाश्वतं ॥

2. यद्विना गृहसंस्थानं
संनिवेशं न शोभते ।
दृढसंस्थानसंयुक्ताः
क्षेमं कुरुत शाश्वतं ॥

1. O ridge-plate, support of the house,
Having been adored with flowers and sandal,
And fixed according to Vāstu rule,
Do thou cause continued prosperity.

2. Without thee the building of a dwelling,
With its roof, cannot prosper.
Do thou, being well fastened together,
Cause happiness ever to be.

As a well is a very necessary adjunct to a house, and a very important one too, from a Hindu point of view, it is not to be wondered at that when the well is dug there should be a religious ceremony, both at the commencement and also at the completion of the undertaking. Before the digging is commenced, prayers are repeated to the earth, which is considered to be a goddess (*bhūdevi*), and also to Varuna, the god of all kinds of water. At the completion of the work, and before the water can be used, a dedicatory ceremony is performed much in the following manner. The mouth of the well is adorned with saffron and the coloured powder *kunkuma*; a patch of ground near the well is prepared and purified by smearing it with cow-dung and adorning it with lines made of rice powder. Upon this patch of earth is placed a lump of saffron which is supposed to represent Ganesha, under the name of Vinayaka, or the remover of obstacles. Worship is then performed to this by the master of the house, instructed by the attendant family priest in the usual manner. A small lamp fed with ghee is lighted, and incense is put upon some live coals of fire; and while the lamp is burning and the incense rising up, flowers and sandal paste and coloured rice are dropped over the supposed god, whose various names are repeated by the worshipper. *Tāmbūlam* (betel) is placed near the god, together with one or two coins (*dakshina*) which become the fee of the priest; and the worship is concluded by the waving of burning camphor, and making obeisance with closed hands (*nāmaskāram*). *Tāmbūlam*, it may be explained, is betel-leaf and areca nut made up into a small parcel, ready to put into the mouth. A little slaked lime is added before use. The masticating of this compound seems to be much enjoyed, but the red colour it imparts to the mouth and lips is far from pleasant from an European point of view. This little

luxury, however, is partaken of at the termination of every meal, and no important transaction, or any religious rite can be complete without it. The god Varuna is then worshipped in much the same manner, by dropping some of the above said things into the well itself; the *tāmbūlam*, however, with the coins, is placed in the hands of the priest, and the whole is concluded with the usual obeisance. During the dropping of the things into the well, the priest repeats the following prayer—the householder following him according to his ability :—

जलाधिराज वरुण
कूपेऽस्मिन्सन्निधिं कुरु ।
त्वत्प्रसादान्महाभाग
सुखिनस्स्याम सर्वदा ॥

O Varuna, thou ruler of the waters,
In this well grant thy presence.
By thy favour, O great being,
May we ever be prosperous.

Enough has been said to give a fairly clear idea of the various ceremonies performed at the building of a Hindu dwelling house. In the next chapter we shall describe the principal architectural features, and general arrangements of the house, as well as the ceremonies necessary before a newly built dwelling can be occupied.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE HINDU HOME.—(*Continued.*)

### गृहम्. (Gruham.)

Try building a house; try making a marriage.

(*Telugu proverb.*)

In this chapter we shall attempt to give some general idea of the architecture, and general arrangements of a Hindu dwelling; but it must be understood that we are speaking, particularly, of an ordinary Hindu house, as it is in the Circars. The style of the building may, and does, differ very much in the widely distant parts of this vast country, and amongst different races and religions, still there are some main principles pervading all Hindu domestic architecture, in parts however remote they may be; hence some general idea may be gathered from this description of a Hindu home. The chief feature in the building is that it must be in the form of a square, with an opening to the sky in the centre. The roof slopes outward and inward, and the inner sides all converge around a rectangular open space, larger or smaller, as the case may be. In large well built houses this central open space will form a regular court-yard, whilst in smaller buildings, it will be so small that the vacant space, where the roof converges, is only a few inches square, and the floor underneath it a mere depression in the earth large enough to catch the rainfall from the roof. In very large houses there may be two of these courts, but in all of them the principle is the same. The origin of this is not very clear, and different reasons are given for it. Some say it is in order that the sun's rays may shine into the house. As it was put by a Brahmin friend, just as it is necessary that there shonld be some gold, if even a speck, worn on the body, so it is necessary for

some few rays, at least, of the sun to fall into the dwelling. On the other hand, others say it is because it is necessary for the rain to fall into the house, in order to secure its happiness. However this may be, there is no doubt that this arrangement is a source of much discomfort if not of positive evil. The heavy monsoon rain pouring in from the roof into the very centre of the living place must make everything very damp and uncomfortable. It is true there is a kind of drain made for the water to pass through, under the walls, to the outside, but it is certainly against all one's notions of hygiene and cannot but be a source of some of the many forms of fever and other diseases to which natives are so liable. Here again we see the effects of custom hardened into a religious law. Probably the origin of it was for protection from foes and wild animals, when things must have been in a very unsettled state. We know that the modern seclusion of the females arose from some such cause, particularly under early Muhammadan rule. Be all this as it may, this is a most generally accepted tenet, and all dwellings erected in accordance with the *Shāstram* must have this characteristic form.

In passing through the streets of an Indian town or village, one notices at once that there are few windows, if any at all, looking out upon the street, and those that may be are often placed high up in the wall, out of all reach of passers by. Often there is nothing presented to the public road but a blank wall with a more or less imposing doorway. This door is generally of a massive character, and is perhaps studded with bosses of iron; whilst, together with the door post, it is often ornamented with elaborate carving. It strikes one as peculiar that this front door should always be of so massive a character, seeing that the back and side walls, or doors, are relatively so much slighter and weaker. An Indian thief would never think of attempting to break through the front door of a dwelling. His efforts are directed to digging through the house or compound wall, especially if it is made of mud, or to breaking in through the back-yard door, which lacks the strength

of the front one. One can only suppose that the spending of time and money on this imposing front entrance is simply in accord with the tendency of human nature ever to put the best on the outside! The front wall next the street is sometimes not the real wall of the house at all. Often, perhaps for reasons already alluded to in speaking of the site, or perhaps for the sake of space, and security, or privacy, the frout wall, with its elaborate doorway, is but the side of the yard or enclosure inside which the house itself is built. In this event, the ceremony alluded to, in the previous chapter, relative to putting up the chief door frame of a new house, is performed, not in connection with this entrance, but in connection with that of the dwelling proper.

On visiting a house, one may at once, on entering the front door, step into the open space or court before spoken of, or there may be a passage from the door with rooms on either side, leading into it. In good houses the open space is always paved with brick, or there is a polished plaster floor; in other cases it is plain mother earth. Around it is a kind of verandah upon which open out the rooms of the dwelling. The four points of the compass are strictly considered in arranging the rooms. The kitchen should always be on the south side, and it runs the whole width of the building. This is the most sacred part of the whole house, and persons of a lower caste than the household are never allowed to enter it. This rule is observed, even in the case of the poorest and meanest dwelling, if it should be that of a high caste man. The kitchen is partly cooking place, partly chapel, and partly dining-room. I have seen the inside of many native houses, but I have never been allowed to cast even a glance into this sacred room. It is but right that I should say that I never made any attempt thus to outrage the sacred feelings of my friends. If a house has an upper storey, it is probably over the front portion, and it is never built over the kitchen. But except in the Presidency cities, and other large towns, houses have, as a rule, no upper storey at all. In an ordinary house, no part of the roof must be higher than that of

the kitchen, for to thus throw that sacred chamber into the shade, as it were, would be decidedly irregular. Where there is an upper storey to any portion of the house, it must, of course, be higher than the kitchen; and in that case the thing is allowed. In this connection a case may be mentioned that only happened quite recently. A well-to-do native gentleman of my acquaintance built a nice terraced entrance-hall to his house, but the result is a room that is very low in relation to its size. The reason for this is that whilst the owner wanted to make it higher, he was not allowed to do so by his caste fellows, as it would then be higher than his kitchen, and he had to submit to rule. One would imagine that my friend might have raised the roof of his kitchen to a corresponding height, but perhaps that never occurred to him, or there may have been other reasons to prevent it.

The rooms opening out on to the inner verandah are the bedrooms, and other private rooms, as well as the store-room, and any other necessary rooms and offices. All the arrangement of rooms is regularly fixed in the *shāstram*, and great blessings are promised where these rules are complied with; whilst misfortunes are implied if the rules are wantonly infringed. One portion of the verandah is apportioned off as a kind of office, or study, in which writing work and the like is done, and this portion is sometimes divided from the rest by a low partition. The inner verandah is also sometimes occupied by a few pet calves, or, it may be, in poorer houses, and where outside space is not available, a cow or two are stalled there for the night. It is an amusing sight, in passing through the streets of an evening, to see the droves of cattle coming home from the pasture. As they go along, every here and there, one or two of the cows or buffaloes will turn aside and go up the steps of a house, passing through the doorway which has been left open on purpose. The animal will proceed straight to its accustomed place in the compound, a shed, perhaps, or to be tied by the leg to a stake driven into the ground out in the open, or sometimes, may be, to its well-known corner in the inner verandah. Truly here

in this country we see exemplified many an eastern usage set forth in the imagery of the Bible; for instance: "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isaiah, i. 3.)

If we look at the furniture of a house we are at once struck with its extreme simplicity. Taste and wealth are not manifested in grand furniture and costly hangings, or any other of the things that go to make up a luxurious home in Europe, or, if what one reads is correct, in some other eastern lands. Good timber, well-made wooden ceilings, and elaborate carvings are here the things most looked to. The roof is, most frequently, open to the tiles or thatch, and hence much discomfort must arise from the falling of dust, or insects and the like; but where it can be procured, simple matting or a wooden ceiling is put up. A wealthy man will have ceiled rooms, and the beams, and posts, and all other wood work most elaborately, and in some cases very beautifully, carved. These are the signs of wealth. The usual mud walls are here replaced by walls of brick and plaster—perhaps the marble-like polished plaster peculiar to the country. The flooring is brick and polished plaster, and the rooms, and verandah, and courts are spacious and lofty, instead of the usual dark dingy and miserably small apartments, whilst the roof is of good well wrought timber, with tiles instead of bamboo, or jungle wood and thatch; but the general features of the whole are the same, in all cases, as regards the architecture and arrangements. The furniture of a Hindu house is very little indeed, as regards quantity, and very primitive in its nature. In the houses of a few of the modern and more advanced, there are occasionally to be found a few chairs, and a table or two; and a chair is usually produced for a European visitor; but as a rule, even amongst the better classes, there is a complete absence of most of the domestic conveniences which even the poorest Europeans consider indispensable. In the kitchen-dining-room there are no tables or chairs, no knives, forks, or spoons, no plates, or dishes, nor are there any of the numerous articles that compose the *batterie de cuisine*

of a well-to-do European home. A few metal or earthenware pots and pans, and a simple clay fire place suffice for the culinary operations, and the large leaf of the lotus or plantain, or a few smaller leaves cleverly stitched together, form the dinner plate, nature herself supplying most of the other requisites. One needs to live amongst such people to learn how very few, after all, are the real necessities of life, if we only rid ourselves of notions formed by habit and custom. In the office place, before mentioned, there may be a low kind of table which serves as a seat by day and a couch by night, there may also be a rug or two spread on the floor with a few cushions to lean against, whilst the walls may be adorned with a few simple pictures representing scenes in the life of Krishna. These pictures are gorgeous and grotesque native productions, being paintings on glass that can be bought in almost every fairly large bazaar. Occasionally a print or two may be seen, perhaps a cutting from some English illustrated paper, but they appear very much out of keeping with the surroundings; far more suitable and at home are the glaring labels from the Manchester cotton goods that one sometimes sees adorning the walls or doors and shutters.

The bed-room furniture too, would not strike an English lady as having that air of snugness and comfort which is the charm of the European bed-chamber. There may be a native cot, and a box, or cupboard for the safe custody of the more expensive cloths and jewels. Along one side of the wall there may be a shelf, and in the wall a few niches for the little native lamps. The lamp is usually a very primitive affair, being composed of a cotton wick lying in a saucer of oil; and is generally placed in some niche in the wall or on a simple wooden stand. The only attempt at adornment is usually a few native pictures on the walls representing, perhaps, scenes from the *Rāmāyana* or some other of the Indian Epics. All the paraphernalia of the toilet table and wash-stand are simply absent; a brass mug-shaped vessel serving for all the purposes of the latter, and a few square inches of looking glass sufficing for the finer touches of the

toilet. The water from the brass vessel is poured from the left hand into the right, or it may be, is poured by an attendant, and this applied to the face serves for ordinary ablutions. The complete bath, in the absence of a river, or tank, or other means of immersion, is taken by pouring water over the person from the same brass vessel. This is the usual mode of performing the toilet for both men and women, and it is generally done in the back-yard or some such suitable place, as may be convenient, or may please the whim or fancy. In passing along the streets in the early morning, one often sees the ordinary citizen, brass pot in hand, performing his morning ablutions, seated on the edge of his front verandah and with his head hanging over the street gutter.

In nothing, perhaps, are the primitive habits of the Hindu more conspicuous than in his ordinary sleeping arrangements. There is no "going to bed," in the sense understood by the European. Of course the climate is the chief reason for this. The men, especially, seem to lie down anywhere, in the inner verandah or along the narrow verandah seat that usually runs along the front wall next to the street. In the villages particularly, they seem to lie about just wherever fancy dictates; no place seems too hard, or, to our ideas, too uncomfortable. The long sheet-like cloth is unwound from the body, or some sheet or blanket which is kept for the purpose is used; and with this the person is covered, head and all. Then stretched out like something in its winding sheet, that sweet slumber is wooed which never seems to be denied, no matter what may be the surroundings. There is no doubt that this custom of lying down to sleep anywhere and everywhere must be the reverse of healthy, and probably it is the cause of much of the rheumatism and kindred affections of the muscles and joints which are more or less prevalent. In the case, perhaps, of the better off classes or the aged and generally by the master of the house, a cot is used for sleeping upon, but it seems to be shifted about from place to place to suit convenience. In the hot weather it will be put where there is some

cool air, whilst in the cold or wet season it will stand in the bed-room, which is perhaps shared by the master of the house and some of his bigger sons. The wife, perhaps, occupies her own room together with the younger children. This seems to be the usual arrangement in Hindu households, especially when the married couple are verging on towards middle life.

When a son of the family marries, he does not take his bride and set up house for himself, but a room in the paternal dwelling is set apart for his use, or perhaps an annex is built to accommodate the young couple, and they join the family as a part of it. It is easy to see how little difficulty there is in providing for visitors; there is no anxiety as to which suite of apartments must be set aside for this or that particular party; there is always plenty of room for the men to lie down for their siesta during the heat of the day, or for their sleep at night, and the females simply lie down with those of the household.

The Hindu does not usually attempt much by way of a flower garden, nor is there generally much attention paid to the surroundings of a house to give it that pretty appearance which tend so much, in our eyes, to make a place look homelike and happy. If there is a plot of ground around the house, it may be that a few pumpkin plants straggle here and there, and a few egg plants, or a clump of plantain trees are grown, but everything has an unkempt appearance as though order and prettiness were unknown quantities in the Hindu mind. If the house is a large one, there may be an orchard attached to it, with some of the principal Indian fruit trees growing in it, as the mango, jack, cocoanut, betel, custard-apple, or wood-apple; but here again the same slovenliness is painfully conspicuous, though so much might be made of such surroundings. Flowers are grown to a certain extent, such as the marigold, and oleander, and jasmine to be used in worship, or to be worn in the hair by the females for personal adornment, and there is always a plant of the *tulasi* or sacred basil *(Ocymum Sanctum)* occupying the place of honour in the masonry urn

somewhere in the inner court or in the yard at the back of the house. There is, however, seldom any flower garden proper; the few plants that are reared seem to lead a very uncared for life in any out of the way corners of the surroundings. It is, as was, previously said, the absence of comfort which seems most conspicuous in a Hindu home. Of this the idea, or sense, or whatever it may be called, does not seem to exist in the Aryan inner consciousness, and hence there can be no manifest development of it.

Having described the most conspicuous architectural features of the ordinary Hindu dwelling, and its general arrangements and surroundings, we will proceed to describe the considerations necessary, from a religious point of view, before the householder can venture to occupy the house which he is supposed to have built. The first thing that has to be considered is the proper time of year for taking up residence in the new abode. On this point there is a little difference of opinion amongst Hindu authorities. According to some, if a house is newly occupied in Vaishākham, the owner will be blessed with many sons; if in Jyēshtam, he will have abundance of joyous festivities, such as marriages and the like; if the house is newly occupied in Phālgunam, the owner will be blessed with wealth; if in Māgham he will have good crops and much happiness. On the other hand there are those who maintain that, although all the other months in the vernal equinox (*Uttarāyanam*) during which the sun is north of the equator, are good for newly entering into a house, Māgham is not a propitious month. This difference of opinion is chiefly between the Tamils, who reckon on the solar system, and the Telugus, who go according to the lunar. All, however, are agreed that it is most unpropitious to enter a new abode for the first time during any month of the second half of the year.

A suitable day for entering having been duly fixed upon, the house is adorned in various ways, chiefly by smearing saffron and *kunkuma* on the lintels and door posts of all the doors in the house, and tying over them a garland of flowers and leaves of the mango or

of the Nērēdu tree (*Eugenia jambos*). A company assembles consisting of the members of the family, and relatives, and friends, and a number of Brahmin pundits. A band of native musicians, and a group of dancing girls may also be in attendance, all of course in proportion to the means of the householder. A procession is formed from the house then inhabited by the owner to his new abode. As the company passes along, the band plays, and every now and then the company will stop before the house of a friend or that of some great person, when the dancing women will go through their performance of dancing and singing, to the sound of a kind of harp and cymbals, and the gentle beating of the tom-tom. The thing is so arranged that the procession arrives at the house at a propitious moment, before fixed upon, when they all enter, walking over grain that has been spread in the door way and all along to the western side of the central portion of the house before spoken of. Worship is then performed to Ganēsha, Vāstupurusha, Venkatēshvara, and other gods, after which the family priest makes the following declaration in the name of the house owner, concluding with a prayer.

The declaration :—

1. सुदिने शुभनक्षत्रे  
शुभलग्ने शुभांशके ।  
नूतने स्वगृहे रम्ये  
पुष्पपल्लवराजिते ॥

2. प्रविशेद्बंधुभिश्चैव  
ब्राह्मणैः परिवारितः ।  
विघ्नेशं सर्वदेवांश्च  
स्वस्तिवाचनपूर्वकं ॥

3. पूजयित्वा यथाशास्त्रं
सदासंतुष्ट मानसः ।
अन्नदानं वस्त्रदानम्
स्वर्णदानं स्वशक्तितः ॥

4. महावादित्रनिर्घोषैः
वीणावेणुमहास्वनैः ।
प्रविष्टस्सर्वसंतुष्ट
कुटुंबः परमेश्वरम् ।
प्रार्थयेद् भक्तिभावेन
सततं हृदि भावितं ॥

1. On an auspicious day, under a lucky star,
At a fortunate moment of time,
(He must enter) his new and beautiful home,
(It being) decorated with flowers and tender leaves.

2. He must enter accompanied by relatives,
Brahmins and others,
(And worship) Vignēshvara and all other gods,
With hymns of praise.

3. Having worshipped according to the Shāstras,
He, with a happy and ungrudging mind,
Must distribute food, and raiment,
And jewels according to his ability.

4. With the sound of great drums,
And the sound of guitars, and lutes,
He must enter with his happy
Family and to the supreme God
Must pray with a reverent mind,
And always meditate upon him.

The Prayer :—

देवदेव महादेव
प्रसीद परमेश्वर ।
रक्षरक्ष जगन्नाथ
सर्वानस्मान्निरंतरं ।
गृहसौख्यं कुटुम्बस्य
ममवर्धय साम्प्रतं ॥

O God of gods! O great God!
Be gracious unto us, O supreme God!
Preserve us, O preserve us, Lord of the universe!
Yea evermore preserve us!
Home, happiness, and domestic joys
Do thou ever increase unto us.

After this, presents are given of cloths and jewels, according to the ability of the house-owner, to the chief workmen who have been engaged in the erection of the building. It is quite a custom in this country for chief workmen to be thus rewarded, and even Europeans follow the ideas of the country so far as to give a jewel or two to the chief workmen after any important building work is finished. The ceremonies of the day are concluded with a blessing after the following manner. A metal dish with coloured rice is produced, and some of the attendant Brahmins take a handful of this, and having repeated *mantrams*, cast it into the cloth of the house-owner, who holds up a corner of his cloth for the purpose. This blessing is a very long one, consisting of quotations from the Vēdas. The concluding portion is here given so as to give some idea of the whole. It may be mentioned that the translation, in this case, is, necessarily, a rather free one.

शतमानं भवति । शतायुः पुरुषः । शतेन्द्रिय । आयु-
ष्येवेन्द्रिये । प्रतितिष्ठति ॥

May thy life continue for a hundred years; and may thy mental and physical powers remain perfect for a hundred years.

The family priest then takes the rice, by handfuls, and pours it on the heads of the house-owner and his wife and children, and any relatives who may be present. On the following day there is a feast in the new house, and if the guests are numerous, an awning may be put up in the yard to accommodate them. In the event of the owner being other than a Brahmin, his Brahmin guests will receive their portion of the feast in an uncooked form, and this they will take away with them to cook in their own houses. On an occasion of this kind, all castes, even Brahmins, will give food to all sorts of people, even the lowest, but of course the principal guests are relatives and friends. We may say that with this feasting the 'house-warming' is concluded.

There are various things that cause a house to become defiled, necessitating its purification. Some of these are only trifling, such as bees settling in the house, or an owl, or a certain kind of kite settling upon it, or flying into it, or any fungus growing anywhere inside. These necessitate a minor kind of purification. The great defilement is caused by death. If any other than one of the chief members of the family is at the point of death, his relatives, carry him out of the house, into the outer verandah, or some such place. The reason for this may be seen from the following. There are twenty-seven lunar mansions (*nakshatram*), of which fourteen are disastrous and thirteen auspicious. Should a person die inside the house during any one of the fourteen inauspicious periods, the house must be abandoned by the whole family, and left vacant for two, three, or six months, according to the particular star then in the ascendant. If, however, the death takes place outside the house, in the outer verandah for instance, only that portion must be divided off and abandoned for the set period. If the death takes place during any of the auspicious periods, the house only has the

ordinary contamination of the family, and is, with them, purified on the eleventh day after the death. It will be thus seen that it is a very risky thing for anyone to die inside a house, as the good or bad periods are only known to those learned in such matters (*Jyōtishka*), and although in the case of the heads of the household, the risk is usually run, sometimes the dying patient will ask to be taken outside to avoid possible trouble to the family.

After any defilement the house is purified in the following manner, a portion only, or the whole ceremony being performed, according to its relative importance. Of course, the most important purification is that upon again taking up residence, after temporary abandonment. The house is thoroughly cleaned up, and probably whitewashed. The family assemble, with their family priest, and several other Brahmins or friends. Ganēsha, under the name of Vighnēsha is worshipped in the manner before described. Water is poured into a vessel (*kalasam*), which is adorned with flowers, and sandal, and the like, and this having been worshipped, and all the gods having been invoked, the water is sprinkled by the priest over the various parts of the house and over the people present. After this food is cooked and partaken of by the company. The *slōkas* or verses repeated by the priest in the worship of the *kalasam* are as follows; being a declaration and a prayer.

The Declaration :—

1. पुण्याहवाचनं कर्म
पवित्रं पापनाशनम् ।
गृहदेहादि शुध्यर्थम्
आत्मशुध्यर्थं मेवच ॥

2. द्रव्यकर्मविशुध्यर्थ
मेतत्कर्म समाचरेत् ।

एवं कृतानां मर्त्यानां
परं श्रेयो भविष्यति ॥

3. गंगादिपुण्यतीर्थानि
देवान् सर्वानृषीन् पितॄन् ।
आवाह्य कलशाग्रेषु
वेदान् यज्ञान् विशोधकान् ॥

4. गंधपुष्पाक्षतैरेवं
अलंकृत्य प्रपूज्य च ।
प्रार्थयेत्परमात्मानं
सर्वाभीष्टफलाप्तये ॥

5. अनिष्टपरिहाराय
गृहसौख्यविवृद्धये ।
पुण्यतीर्थं वेदपूतं
देवपूतं शुचिव्रतः ॥

6. धारयेत् शिरसा भक्त्या
गृहादीन् परिशोधयेत् ।
ब्राह्मणानथसंपूज्य
फलदानादिदक्षिणैः ॥

7. आशिषः प्रतिगृह्याथ
ब्राह्मणेभ्यो निरन्तरं ।

एवं समाप्य कर्माणि
भोजयेत् बन्धुभिस्सह ॥

1. This punyāhavāchanam rite
Is holy and destroys sin.
It is for the purification of a house, the body, and other things;
And also for that of the mind.

2. For the purifying of the things of a house,
This rite must be observed.
To those who act in this manner,
Much good will happen.

3. The Ganges with all other holy rivers,
And all the gods, rishis, and ancients,
Also the Vedas and sacrifices,
Having been invoked into these vessels (now before us),

4. Which having adorned and worshipped,
With sandal, flowers, and coloured rice,
He (the householder) must pray to the supreme God
That all his desires may be fulfilled.

5. For the removal of all evils,
And the increase of home joys,
This holy water, purified by the Vedas,
And by all the gods,

6. He, with a pure mind, must sprinkle
On his head and on the house and its effects.
Then having propitiated the Brahmins
With gifts of fruit and money and the like,

7. Also having received blessings
From the Brahmins which will ever continue
In this manner concluding the rite,
He must take food with his relatives and friends.

The Prayer :—

1. पापोऽहं पापकर्माहं
पापात्मा पापसंभवः ।
त्राहि मां कृपया देव
शरणागतवत्सल ॥

2. मत्समः पातको नास्ति
त्वत्समो नास्ति मोचकः ।
पापिनं मां सदा ज्ञात्वा
यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥

1. I am a sinner; all my deeds are sinful.
I am of a sinful mind; I am born in sin.
O God, in mercy save me!
Thou who art merciful to those who flee to thee.

2. There is no sinner equal to me.
There is no deliverer like unto thee.
Ever knowing me to be a sinner.
As is thy pleasure, so do.

Much the same kind of purificatory ceremony is gone through in the event, for instance, of the well getting ceremonially contaminated. A case occurred quite recently, in which a well of good water became impure through a non-caste servant of a European, who had access to it, having ventured to draw water from the well himself instead of getting some caste man to draw for him. Some stir was caused by this, and the European master was petitioned to pay the expenses of the purification rendered necessary by the act of his servant. To this demand he gave a firm refusal, his right to the use of the well not being disputed. It ended by the well being simply aban-

doned, as far as all caste people were concerned, and left for the use of the non-castes only and Europeans, as it is to this day.

There are various other occasions calling for purification; as, for instance, if a robber were to break into a house and go into the kitchen, as he might be a low caste man, the full purification ceremony would be necessary; if a dog or any other unclean animal were to die in or near the house, the place must be purified by sprinkling water mixed with cow dung, or with cow's urine. This is a minor purification which is often resorted to for lesser defilements. Enough, however, has been said to give a general idea of defilements and purifications connected with the Hindu home, and to go further into detail would exceed our limits.

What has been here attempted is to give some general idea of the material home itself, rather than the home life of the people. Doubtless home life, true domestic happiness, is much influenced by the immediate surroundings, but, after all, habit and custom are much if not everything in such matters, and certainly many an Indian home is happy in spite of what may seem to us its dulness and monotony. The old English proverb which says that "Home is home be it ever so homely" expresses a truth that can be applied in many ways; it is the hearts that make the home. What must be deplored, however, is the hard bondage to superstition that is so evident in every page of this description—a thraldom emancipation from which seems so remote, and, viewed by itself, well nigh hopeless. It is but a mere truism to say that real progress in a nation cannot be said to have begun until it affects the home life; and, as regards India, it is the home that seems the last place to be affected by progress and enlightenment. Superstitions and kindred evils that would seem to be effete, if considered in the light of the platform and the press, are seen in the home life, to be as deeply rooted and as bindingly powerful as ever.

# CHAPTER III.

## THE HINDU DAILY ROUND.

### नित्यकर्म. (Nityakarma).

"Self-love is no laudable motive, yet an exemption from self-love is not to be found in this world: on self-love is grounded the study of Scripture, and the practice of actions recommended in it.

"Eager desire to act has its root in expectation of some advantage; and with such expectation are sacrifices performed; the rules of religious austerity and abstinence from sins are all known to arise from hope of remuneration. Not a single act here below appears ever to be done by a man free from self-love; whatever he performs, it is wrought from his desire of reward." (Manu II. 2, 3, 4.)

This quotation from the ancient law-giver might serve well as a text upon which to found a homily, showing the distinctive principle that underlies all Hindu religion, and comparing it with that of the religion of Christ. All Hindu religious observances, and good works, proceed from a desire to propitiate a malevolent power, and thus ward off evil, or, from an equally low and selfish motive, to obtain personal advantage—to obtain some worldly good, or to lay up a store of personal merit so as the sooner to have done with the weary round of transmigration, and attain the goal of each one's aspirations, absorption into the divine essence. True the great sage does, in a verse following on the above quotation, say that should any one persist in discharging his duties without any view to their fruits, he would attain hereafter the state of the immortals; but he says this with what sounds like a saddened tone, and as though it were a foregone conclusion that such disinterested motives could never be found. One might point out

how different all this is to the motive for love to God and obedience to the Divine law, as laid down in the Christian Vedas; how being constrained by the love of Christ, loving God because He first loved us, love springing from gratitude for infinite benefits already conferred (2 Cor. v. 14: 1 John iv. 19), how this is the motive held out as the one that ought to actuate the Christian, and which does, more or less, actuate numberless followers of Jesus of Nazareth, however it may be set aside by many mere professors. To follow this thought further would form a most instructive theme, but it would be somewhat beside the purpose in hand, which is to describe the daily life of an orthodox Hindu of the present day; that is, as far as his religious rites and ceremonies are concerned. In this series of chapters on Hindu life and ways, it is not, perhaps, necessary to say much by way of comment as we proceed; that is not needed, for there is so much upon the surface that must, naturally, furnish food for reflection without need of much such prompting.

Before entering upon the subject before us it would be well to mention that what we have in view is the daily life of a Brahmin. Other castes and non-castes are less particular in their religious observances, in proportion as they descend in the social scale, but all are more or less particular in their performance of some parts of the Hindu ritual, and from a description of the life of the highest, a fair idea can be gathered of the whole.

Theoretically the life of a Brahmin is divided into four stages. The first, that of being a *Brahmachāri* or unmarried student, is entered upon when he undergoes the ceremony of *Upaṇayanam*, or institution into the state of the twice born. Up to that time he has not been a Brahmin at all, as will be seen in the chapter on the Yagnōpavītam, or sacred thread. The next stage is that of being a *Gruhastha* or Married householder; the third that of a *Vānaprastha* or anchorite; the fourth that of a *Sanyāsi* or hermit. The daily course of life laid down for each of these stages is widely different, but without going into that

of the other three, we shall attempt to give as clear an idea as we can of the various rites and ceremonies that should be gone through every day by the strict Hindu during the second period, that of the ordinary married man. It is not to be supposed that every Brahmin in these days goes through the whole of the prescribed ritual; but there are some ceremonial observances that must be gone through by all; and any one who is anxious for the merit and good name of being strictly religious, (and there are very many such to be met with), does actually go through the daily course of life here described.

The pious Brahmin rises before daybreak; strictly according to *Dharma Shāstra* rule this should be two hours before sun rise. Dharma Shāstra is a written code minutely regulating the daily life of a good Hindu. His first thoughts on awaking from slumber, are directed to the deity whom he particularly worships. He will sit quietly for some time in silent contemplation, occasionally repeating a verse or two in praise of Krishna, and Rama, or Siva, as the case may be, and perhaps a prayer for divine help. He does not repeat these verses from the Vedas, as he has not yet bathed, and no words from those sacred writings must be taken within lips whilst thus unpurified. They are from the *Purānas* or sacred books which occupy a lower position than the Vedas. The following are specimens and it will be seen that the first two of the three quoted, are addressed to Krishna and Rama respectively, whilst the third is in praise of Siva. *Vaishnavas*, or worshippers of Vishnu and his various incarnations, would use the first two; but they would not use the third. *Smārthas* would use either or all of the three, as whilst they chiefly worship Siva they are at liberty to adore any other god of the Hindu pantheon.

बालाय नीलवपुषे नवकिंकिणीक
जालाभिरामजघनाय दिगम्बराय ।

शार्दूलदिव्यनखभूषणभूषिताय
नन्दात्मजाय नवनीतमुषे नमस्ते ॥

O thou infant, thou dark blue bodied one with tinkling bells
In rows upon thy loins; thou naked one,
Adorned with jewels set with tiger's claws,
Thou son of Nanda, thou stealer of butter, I adore thee!

आपदामपहर्तारं
दातारं सर्वसंपदां ।
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं
भूयोभूयो नमाम्यहं ॥

O thou deliverer from all evil,
Thou giver of all good things!
O Rama thou admired of the whole world
Again and again I adore thee!

चूडामणीकृतविधु
र्वलयी कृतवासुकिः ।
भवोभवतु भव्याय
लीलाताण्डवपण्डितः ॥

May he whose head is adorned with the moon,
Who wears as an ornament the serpent Vasukihi;
May Siva be propitious,
He who is expert in dancing!

After this divine contemplation, he will proceed for a short walk to some secluded place outside the town or village, and upon his return, before going in doors, he will carefully wash his feet and legs and rinse out his mouth many times with water; all this is necessary before he can touch any thing or even speak to any one. The next operation is to clean the teeth. This is always a very important item of the

toilet, and, if any one may judge by the evident air of satisfaction with which it is done, it must be a very enjoyable one. The Hindu does not use a brush for this purpose, as he never can again put into his mouth that which has once been so used; he looks with abhorrence upon the European way of again putting into the mouth that which has over and over again been defiled by contact with the saliva. He always uses a bit of green twig or the root of some plant; and when once a piece is used it is thrown away. A favourite twig for this purpose is a green bit of the margosa tree *(Melia Azadirachta)*, or the root of a plant called Apamargam or Uttarēni (*Achyranthes Aspera*); preference being given to that which is bitter and astringent. If a suitable twig cannot be found, nature's brush, the finger, is used, with powdered charcoal or ashes by way of tooth powder. It is very odd, but women are not allowed to use the twig or root for this part of their ablutions; they can only use the finger. This is a bit of petty tyranny towards the fair sex that is not easy to account for, but which is strictly in accordance with the doctrine that the woman must in every thing be inferior to the lords of creation.

Our friend next proceeds to perform his morning ablutions and worship. If there should be a river near, he will proceed thither, failing that, to a tank, and failing either of these, he goes to some well, probably the well in his own garden, or yard. He then takes his bath; if in the river, or tank, he goes in until the water reaches his breast or neck; if at the well, he pours the water over himself. Should he, through ill health, or old age, be unable to actually bathe in the cold morning air, he will perhaps rub himself over with a wet cloth. Before this operation, he repeats the following prayer which is an invocation to the sacred rivers:—

Oh Ganges! oh Jumna!
Oh Godavery! oh Sarasvati!
Oh Narmadé! oh Indus! oh Cavery!
Be ye present in this water.

If the bathing is in a tank or river, after repeating this invocation, he dips right under three times, if it is at a well, he pours water over himself, shouting out "Hari"—one of the names of Vishnu, or "Hara"—one of the names of Siva, according as he is a Vaishnava or a Saiva. Still standing in the water or by the well, he turns to the rising sun, and pours out to it three oblations of water, repeating the *Gayatri* prayer each time.

The bathing over, the next thing is to repeat the morning prayer (*Sandhyāvandanam*), which is done, sometimes near the tank, or river, and sometimes after reaching home. In the event of his doing it at home he will take some water in a vessel from the place where he has bathed. Before, however, the prayers can be said, the Pundrams, or marks must be daubed on (see chapter on the Sacred Marks). If the prayers are said at the water, the worshipper will simply make the marks on his forehead with water, or with earth from the river bed. The morning prayer commences by the repeating of some mantrams to drive away evil spirits from the spot. The worshipper takes three sips of water, repeating the names Keshava, Nārāyana, Mādhava, which are applied both to Vishnu and Siva, according to his sect. This sipping of water is called *achamanam*, and it is done before every religious ceremony and immediately after meals. The next thing is the mentioning of the time and place, &c. (*sankalpam*), as will be described in another chapter. Three oblations, or pouring out of water, are again made to the sun, during which the Gāyatri is again repeated three times. Three more sips of water are taken, when, taking hold of his sacred thread the worshipper again repeats the Gāyatri, at least ten times—marking off the times on the fingers or on the joints of the fingers. After this with clasped hands, he addresses a special prayer to the sun commencing as follows :—

मित्रस्य चर्षणी धृतः, श्रवो देवस्य सानसिं, सत्यं चित्रश्र

वस्तमं.

The renown of the good Surya, (the sun) who is the supporter of mankind and who is worthy to be adored. It is imperishable and it gives health and prosperity to those who hear and honour it.

This done, the worshipper turns to the four quarters of the compass, in the order of east, south, west, and north, repeating at each quarter the following prayer. In all ceremonies and processions of every kind, the turning must always be to the right, and never to the left; hence the order, east, south, &c. The prayer is as follows :—

ओं नमः प्राच्यै दिशे याश्चदेवता एतस्यां प्रतिवसन्ति एताभ्यश्च नमोनमः ॥

Om. I bow to the east (or other quarter, as the case may be); whatever gods are in this quarter I adore.

The prayers conclude by the worshipper mentioning his own name, tribe, family, &c. (*pravara*), when, if he should be the head of the household, he proceeds to pour out oblations to the manes of his ancestors, three each to his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, mentioning their names and preceding the whole by *sankalpam* and *pravara*. This ceremony is called *pitrutarpanam*.

The Gāyatri prayer has been before alluded to; and as it enters so largely into the daily ritual, it may be well to describe, at more length, its great importance. This prayer, as indeed is the case with most mantrams, is always preceded by repeating the mystical monosyllable O M, or A U M, as it should be written; this triliteral syllable typifying the Trimurti, or Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahēshvara or Siva. The sacredness in which this word is held may be judged of from the following quotations.

"Brahma milked out, *as it were* the three Vedas, the letter A, the letter U, and the letter M, *which form by their coalition the triliteral monosyllable*, together with three mysterious words, *bhur bhuvah, sever* or earth, sky, heaven."

"All rites ordained in the Veda, oblations to fire, and solemn sacrifices pass away; but that which passes not away is declared to be the syllable *Om*, thence called *Achshara*: since it is a symbol of God the Lord of created beings." (Manu II. 76, 85).

The Gāyatri is the most sacred of all Hindu prayers, and it must be repeated at least thirty times every day; that is, ten each for morning, noon, and evening prayers, being preceded each time, it is said, by the sacred word O M, and the words *bhur, buvaha, swaha.* Great advantage is supposed to accrue in proportion to the number of times this prayer is repeated, and many are the injunctions laid down with reference to it. Its origin is thus described by Manu:—

"From the three Vedas, also, the Lord of creatures, incomprehensibly exalted, successively milked out the three measures of that ineffable text, beginning with the word tad, and entitled Sāvitri or Gāyatri." (II. 7. 7).

Instructions for its repetition morning and evening and the benefits obtained thereby are thus particularized.

"At the morning twilight let him stand repeating the Gāyatri until he see the sun; and at evening twilight, let him repeat it sitting, until the stars distinctly appear!"

"He who stands repeating it at the morning twilight, removes *all unknown* nocturnal sin; and he who repeats it sitting at evening twilight, disperses the taint that has unknowingly been contracted in the day!" (II. 101, 102).

By continued repetition of the Gāyatri at the twilights, the holy sages acquire length of days, perfect knowledge, reputation during life, fame after death, and celestial glory. (IV. 94).

One more quotation may be given to show the great benefits suppose to be conferred by the use of this prayer, and which will serve to account for its constant use in the daily ritual.

"For as the dross and impurities of metallic ores are consumed by fire thus are the sinful acts of the human organs consumed by suppressions of the breath whilst the mystic

words, and the measures of the Gāyatri are revolved in the mind." (Manu VI. 71).

Before dismissing this topic, it may be well to quote this wonderful prayer, for it is very short, even with the addition of the Om, &c., which are merely used as a kind of preface. So sacred is this mantram held by Hindus, that a pious Brahmin would close his ears with horror if he heard it uttered by impure lips. It is one of the most ancient of all Aryan prayers and its interest is increased when we consider that even now, after being in use since centuries before the Christian era, it still daily rises up to heaven as the aspiration of untold multitudes of pious Hindus. For these reasons, besides quoting the original in the true Dēvanāgari characters, transliteration, as well as the English translation, is appended:—

ओं भूर्भुवः सुवः
ओं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं ।
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om, bhur buvah suvah
Om, tat savitur varēnyam
Bargō dēvasya dhīmahi
Dhiyō yōnah prachōdayāt.

It must be noted that the first line is a kind of introduction to the prayer proper, being an invocation to the gods dwelling in the three worlds, earth, sky, heaven. The prayer is again introduced by the sacred word Om, which I am assured, by a Pandit friend, is the true form now in use. The translation is as follows :—

Om-earth, sky, heaven!
Om-that excellent vivifier,
The light divine, let us meditate upon,
Which (light) enlightens our understanding.

That is:—Let us meditate upon that excellent vivifier, the light divine, which enlightens our understanding.

Many who are careless will not perform morning prayers; they will perhaps say them together with those for midday, or perhaps not at all. Any one, however, who wishes to be respected as a good Hindu, will not fail to perform them as above described. Be this as it may, the midday ceremonies, before food, cannot be omitted by any one on pain of liability to excommunication; although it is doubtful whether in these days of latitudinarianism, any one is ever really excommunicated for such a cause.

It must be borne in mind that no food of any kind can be taken by the Brahmin before the noontide bath and ceremonies are over; therefore, if occasion should necessitate his setting out for business before midday, things in the household would be hastened to suit circumstances.

The first proceeding in these, as in every other ceremony, is a bath. On going indoors from the bath, the wet cloth is laid aside, and a pure cloth is wound round the waist. When the word pure is here used, it means *ceremonially* pure. The cloth thus used is one generally kept for the purpose, and, even if it has come home clean from the washerman, it must be at least rinsed out by the person himself or some one of his family. Sometimes a silk cloth is used, as that is supposed to be less liable to pollution than cotton, and this distinction is also conferred upon linen cloths. After putting on the pure waist cloth, the next thing is to put on the *pundrams* or sacred marks, after which the midday *sandhyāvandanam* or noontide prayers are said, which prayers are exactly the some as those above described for the morning, except that the special prayer to the sun is a different one; this one commencing thus:—

आसत्येन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च॥ हिरण्य-
येन सविता रथेना देवो याति भुवना विपश्यन्॥

The circling sun who has a luminous disc that shines everywhere with a true light, and who revives both men and the immortals, is coming on his golden car viewing the world.

The oblations to the manes of ancestors are also repeated, as in the morniug, after which comes the daily worship of the household gods. This, in the case of *Lingaits*, is worshipping the *lingam*, and it is gone through by each individual, both males and females, but in the case of the worshippers of Vishnu, it is only performed by the head of the household. Should, however, the head of the house be unable, through pressure of business, or from any other cause, to go through this part of the daily observances, he will appoint some other of the household or perhaps, if a well-to-do person, the Purōhita, to do it for him by proxy.

This *dēvatārchana*, or worship of the gods, is performed in what may be called the kitchen. The kitchen of a Brahmin house is a very sacred place, and it answers in some respects also, to what may be called, a private chapel. This matter however has been described in the chapter on the Hindu Home; it is not therefore necessary to do more than allude to it here. This room is separated by a low partition wall into two parts; the smaller one is for the fire places and cooking operations, and it also serves as a pantry for the pickles and curry-stuffs all of which must be kept free from ceremonial contamination. The larger half of the kitchen serves for the dining room, and also, in an alcove, there are kept the household gods and the various instruments used in their worship. Amongst the followers of Vishnu, the one who officiates at this daily worship of the gods, proceeds to the kitchen, and takes the images from their receptacle, keep a small basket of wicker work, usually covered with antelope skin. Amongst Sri Vaishnavas the images are only those that represent Vishnu; the Smārtas, however, as they reverence both Vishnu and Siva, have in addition to these a *lingam*; whilst the Madvas have, as their additional figure, an image of *Hanuma*, the monkey god. The worshipper then

proceeds to bathe the images and rubs them with sandalwood paste; he also puts on them the *pundrams*, after which he places them on a low stool. Small lights fed with ghee are then lit before them, and they are worshipped by the leaves of the tulasi plant and certain kinds of flowers, if they can be obtained, being sprinkled over them; this is followed by the waving before them of a small piece of burning camphor, during which a small bell or gong is sounded. Whilst this is going on a mantram is said, the first few words of which are as follows:—

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः
सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वा
अत्यतिष्ठद्दशांगुलं ॥

The great supreme has countless heads
Countless eyes and feet.
He encircles the whole earth;
He is larger than the earth by ten inches.

After this worship is over, there is *nivēdanam* or offering of the food to the gods. The food about to be consumed is placed near; the rice and dholl and such like things and the water, all are sanctified by being offered to the gods. The person officiating waves his hands over these things towards the images, repeating the following mantram which is merely a repetition of the names of the five vital airs of which life is supposed to consist, requesting that the food partaken of may benefit each respectively:—

Om, may this become food for prāna!
Om, may this become food for apāna!
Om, may this become food for vyāna!
Om, may this become food for udāna!
Om, may this become food for samāna!

After several minor ceremonies, the whole is concluded by his taking three sips of the water in which the images have been bathed, and giving the rest of it to be drunk in like manner, by the family present. Should there be more of this water than can be thus consumed, it is disposed of by being sprinkled over their bodies, or pouring on the sacred tulasi plant.

It has been already said that this part of the daily ceremonies is different with the *Lingaits.* With them, each individual takes his Lingam, and, holding it in his left hand, bathes it and worships it in very much in the same manner as has been above described. The food is offered in the same way, except that this is done after it is served out to each person, when each one waves his right hand from his own mess towards the Lingam, which is in his left. The chief difference in the ceremony is that the mantram repeated is different from the one quoted above, as used by the followers of Vishnu. Instead of the mantram commencing, "The great supreme has countless heads," the Lingaits repeat one commencing as follows :—

नमो हिरण्यबाहवेसेनान्ये दिशां च पतये नमो नमः ॥

I adore thee (Siva) whose arms are wisdom and who art commander of the hosts; thou who art the lord of the ends of the earth I adore thee.

After all this ceremony is over, the doors having been securely barred to prevent any interruptions or impure intrusions, the family sit down to food.

This precaution is necessary as, if any one were for any cause to get up from his food, he could not sit down to it again, and if any impure thing, a dog for instance, were to stroll in whilst the meal was going on, or if any lower caste person were to go near them whilst thus engaged, (an event difficult to imagine), the whole meal would have to be at once abandoned. The order of sitting at meals is this; all sit upon low stools or upon the ground, the place of honour being the right end of the line, the rest

sitting in a row towards the left in order of age, the little boys and girls sitting somewhat apart. The females, do not sit down to food with the males, but it is customary for the little girls together with the little boys to join the family group. After the food has been duly served out by the females, and each one has his mess before him on his leaf, there is another ceremony which each must perform before he can proceed to eat; of course by *each* must not be understood the little boys who have not received the *Upanayanam*, or the little girls. Each one has his drinking vessel on his left hand and he pours from this some water into his right hand. He sprinkles a little of this over the food, and the rest he pours from his hand in a circle round his 'plate', repeating the *Gāyatri*. Some sects also put a little pinch of rice in four places on the right side of the platter saying:—

ओं चित्राय नमः

चित्रगुप्ताय नमः ।

यमाय नमः

सर्वभूतेभ्यो नमः ॥

Om. Oh! Chitra (a scribe of Yama) I adore thee.
Oh! Chitragupta (another scribe of Yama) I adore thee.
Oh! Yama (god of death and hell), I adore thee.
Oh! all living creatures, I adore you.

After this, the meal is duly proceeded with. The ceremonial necessary before partaking of food seems to us very tedious, and one would think it must be very tantalizing to a hungry man. Use, however, is every thing, and from long practice the ceremony does not take so much time as might be supposed. The food is eaten with the right hand, but the water is always drunk from the left, that is, the water vessel must be taken up with the left hand and not the right. This is probably because the right hand has touched the mouth. The vessel from which the

water is drunk must not touch the lips; it is held a little distance over the upturned mouth, and the fluid poured into the mouth. Custom makes this an easy feat for the Hindu, whereas it would probably choke a European were he to attempt it. It is well known by all, that the Hindu is very particular as to the water he drinks. It must be ceremonially pure, though not necessarily chemically pure. In order to ensure its purity, it must be very carefully fetched, and always kept in the kitchen where it cannot be touched. If a man or woman, in carrying the pots of drinking water from the river, or tank, or well, to the house, were to come near an outcaste or to come in contact with any impure person or thing, the water would have to be thrown away and fresh fetched; not only so but the one carrying it would again have to bathe him or herself, and again carefully wash out the vessels. Indeed many Brahmins are so particular in this respect, that if, on carrying the water, they were even to see a Pariah, they would throw it away and return for more.

The meal is concluded by each one taking a single sip of water, saying :—

अमृतापिधानमसि ॥
रौरवे पुण्यनिलये
पद्मार्बुदनिवासिनां ।
मर्थिनामुदकंदत्तं
अक्षरय्यमुपतिष्ठतु ॥

Oh! water thou art become my protector.
In the hell called rourava, the abode of the wicked,
To those who for billions of years have suffered there,
And beg for water, it is given:
May it never be exhausted.

Evening prayer, which should be performed at sunset, is the same as that of the morning and noon

*sandhyāvandanam,* except that instead of the special prayer to the sun there is inserted one to *Varuna* the Hindu Neptune,—the god of the waters.

इमं मे वरुण शृधी हव
मद्या च मृडय
त्वामव स्युराचके ।

O Varuna! hear my cry :
Now fill me with happiness :
I who am helpless come to thee.

The household gods are not again worshipped, as at noon, except that at the evening meal the food to be consumed is offered to them by what may be called the 'wave offering', accompanied by the ringing of the bell, or beating of the gong, and the burning of the lights. The evening meal, or supper, is conducted with much the same ceremonies as those described for that at noon. It is usually taken late in the evening, say about eight or nine o'clock, as may be most convenient.

It may be mentioned that, if on a journey and unable to reach the shelter of a suitable house or choultry (public rest-house), the Brahmin may cook and partake of his food in a grove or under a single tree, or in some other such place, although he cannot secure the privacy desirable. Still all the ritual must as far as possible, be followed just the same as if he were in the sanctity of his own home. This way of taking food is called Vanabhōjanam, from *vanam* a forest or grove or garden and *bhojanam* food. In the event of no suitable place being found, or there being no necessary privacy, then a meal cannot be taken at all, and the traveller must fast. The Hindu, however, is, from habit and constitution, better able to endure such personal privation, than would be possible with a European.

Another kind of compromise that is made is in the event of any one being too ill to bathe at all. In

such an event, the invalid before partaking of food is, if a Vaishnava, sprinkled with pure water by some one present, repeating three times the word *pundarīkāksha* (The white lotus eyed one,—one of the names of Vishnu) or, if the one so sprinkles is sufficiently learned, he may repeat the following mantram.

अपवित्रः पवित्रवा
सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपिवा ।
यःस्मरेत्पुंडरीकाक्षं
स बाह्याभ्यंतरःशुचिः ॥

Man, whether pure or impure,
Or in whatsoever plight he may be,
If he but repeat the name Pundarīkāksha
He obtains both outward and inward purity.

If the sick person should be a Saiva, instead of the above, he is rubbed with vibhūti or white clay with which the sacred marks are daubed on (see chapter on Sacred Marks), and another kind of mantram is said which is as follows :—

त्रियंबकं यजामहे सुगंधिं पुष्टिवर्धनं ।
उर्वारुकमिवबंधनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय्यमामृतात् ॥

Siva the three eyed one we adore; he is fragrant, and he increases strength. May he deliver me from death as the gourd is parted from its stem.

Before retiring for the night, the pious Hindu will occupy himself in repeating a few prayers in very much the same way as has been described on his rising in the morning. A usual one for Smārtas to use on this occasion is as follows :—

दुःस्वप्नदुश्शकुनदुर्गतिदौर्मनस्य-
दुर्भिक्षदुर्व्यसनदुस्सहदुर्यशांसि ।
उत्पाततापविषभीतिमसद्ग्रहार्तिं
व्याधींश्च नाशयतु मे जगतामधीशः ॥

Bad dreams, evil omens, misfortune, evil thoughts,
Famine, evil desires, impatience, dishonour,
Accidents, grief, poisons, fears, evil stars,
Diseases from all these may the lord of the worlds protect me.

It will have been noticed in the course of this sketch, that all the rites and ceremonies are performed by males; the female really has nothing to do with rites and ceremonies. As an old shastri put it, her *vratam* (religious observance) is *pativratam*; *pati* meaning husband or lord. Still the religious instinct of women cannot be entirely suppressed, and they do, as a matter of fact, perform worship of a kind as will be seen in the succeeding chapter.

Seeing the number of temples there are on every hand, it may surprise the ordinary observer to find that there is no regular going to service as with Christians. Each house has its own private chapel, (see page 44) and, the daily worship and such like ceremonies as are performed there. The priests in the temple bathe the god every day, and duly worship it there; perhaps the idea being that this is done vicariously for the followers of that particular god. On certain festivals and high-days, of which there are many, the people, both males and females, go to the temples to do pūja to the god; to bow to the image and to make offerings of flowers or fruit and the like, and perhaps a few coins of money, but of church-going, in the ordinary sense of the world, there is none. There is no public religious teaching of any kind, and hence the dense ignorance of the bulk of the people, even as regards the simplest matters of their own religion.

From a perusal of this series of sketches it will be seen what a valley of dry bones is the whole Hindu ritual; how meaningless, and spiritless, are the forms and words of the whole ceremonial; forms and words gone through, too often, as a mere matter of form, and without any attempt to understand their meaning, so that it is thus often little better than a mere fetichism. There is, however, a bright side to the picture thus

presented; it will be noticed how intensely religious the Hindu is naturally; for nothing but an inherent craving after the spiritual could cause a nation to submit to so burdensome a ritual. Religion is with him a thing of every day life, and it pervades every thing from the cradle to the grave. Once let the holy faith of Jehovah, the one true Dēva, and Christ, the one true Incarnation, once let this get a fair hold of the Hindus as a people; once let the Holy Wind blow from the four corners of heaven, and there will be heard a shaking amongst the dry bones, a shaking, faint sounds of which can even now be heard, though perhaps still as in the far distance, by the patient and believing listener. There is more hope for the bigoted Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, than for the Gallios who care for none of these things. The religious instinct of the Hindus is such as to give bright hopes of the future to those who are willing to patiently toil on, sowing the good seed of eternal life, and waiting God's own good time for the harvest. Then perhaps may be seen a nation born in a day and a whole people turn from dead works to serve the living God.

## CHAPTER IV.

# THE HINDU WOMAN'S RELIGION.

### स्त्रीधर्मः. (Stree Dharmah).

No sacrifice is allowed to women apart from their husbands, no religious rite, no fasting: as far only as a wife honours her lord, so far she is exalted in heaven.—Manu v. 155.

It is pleaded by some, in defence of Hinduism, and especially of the low position occupied by Hindu women, that this is the *Kaliyuga,* the iron age, or age of universal degeneracy, and that in primitive times, things were different generally, and the status of woman much higher than it is now. There may be, and doubtless there is, some truth in this, but there is also evidence that, as in modern, so in early days too, the woman was ever to be kept in a state of abject submission to the lords of creation. Even in a much quoted text of Manu, though it is said that in those times a man might perform religious rites *together with* his wife, it will be seen that the woman is nothing without the man. The verse runs as follows:—

To be mothers were women created; and to be fathers, men; religious rites, therefore, are ordained in the *Veda* to be performed *by the husband* together with the wife. (ix. 96.)

The whole of the laws of Manu show, most unmistakably, that they were made by *men* and that their whole aim was to keep the other sex in complete submission; and this not only in matters of general behaviour but also in the sacred matter of religion and the soul's need. The woman must never dare have a will of her own or at any period of her life decide for herself in any thing:—

By a girl or by a young woman, or by a woman advanced in years, nothing must be done, even in her own dwelling place, according to her mere pleasure. (v. 147.)

She must always be distrusted and looked upon with suspicion as capable of doing any wrong, or as perhaps it would be more right to say, as incapable of doing anything right. A king is directed to let his females be well tried and attentive, their dress and ornaments having been examined, lest some weapon should be concealed in them. They are to do him humble service with fans, water, and perfume. (vii. 219.)

The husband is directed never to eat with his wife nor look at her eating (iv. 43) ; she must never even mention his name, and she must be in such absolute subjection that no amount of outrage upon her sense of propriety or affections is to be resented or cause estrangement.

Though inobservant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife. (v. 154.)

A wife is to be considered as a mere maternal machine and domestic drudge ; and this is, in brief, the light in which she is depicted by the sacred Lawgiver. Doubtless as long as human nature is what it is, there will be instances where man will be better than his creed and where women will rise to higher influence and status than those laid down for them; but the fact remains that it is thus decreed :—

Let the husband keep his wife employed in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in purification and female duty in the preparation of daily food, and the superintendence of household utensils.

The production of children, the nurture of them when produced, and the daily superintendence of domestic affairs are peculiar to the wife. (ix. 11, 27.)

Thus is depicted the social status of woman in the former and better ages, as distinct from what it actually is in this *Kaliyuga* or degenerate age; and, as if this were not enough, her very soul is to be in subjection too, and that religious instinct which is a glory to womanhood is denied free expression, but must be bound in the chains of a cruel servitude.

Women have no business with the texts of the *Veda;* thus is the law fully settled: having therefore no evidence of law, and no knowledge of expiatory texts, sinful women must be as foul as falsehood itself; and this is a fixed rule. (ix. 18.)

We have said that cramped and confined though it may be, the better side of human nature will sometimes show itself; for no code devised of man can entirely eradicate the better promptings of the human heart. In Hindu story there are not wanting instances of a better appreciation of woman's qualities than the cast-iron codes would admit of. In his instructive book, *Brahmanism and Hinduism,* Sir Monier Williams gives the following translation of the definition of a wife as found in the *Mahābhārata* :—

A wife is half the man, his truest friend;
A loving wife is a perpetual spring
Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife
Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;
A sweetly-speaking wife is a companion
In solitude, a father in advice,
A rest in passing through life's wilderness. (p. 389)

There is also a most touchingly beautiful piece in the *Rāmayana* to be found translated into English in Volume II. of Ward's book on the History of the Literature and Mythology of the Hindus. It purports to be the address of Sita to her husband Rāma. Rāma was banished by the king, his father Dasaratha, at the instigation of his third wife Kaikēya, who wished the succession for her own son. He was doomed to perpetual exile in the forest, and his wife expresses her determination to go with him. As a

beautiful expression of tender affection I cannot refrain from quoting the piece at length. It serves to show that the affectionate nature of a true woman is ever the same, despite its surroundings.

Son of the venerable parent! hear,
'Tis Seeta speaks. Say art not thou assur'd
That to each being his allotted time
And portion, as his merit, are assign'd
And that a wife her husband's portion shares?
Therefore with thee this forest lot I claim.
A woman's bliss is found, not in the smile
Of father, mother, friend, nor in herself:
Her husband is her only portion here,
Her heaven hereafter. If thou, indeed,
Depart this day into the forest drear,
I will precede, and smooth the thorny way.
O hero brave, as water we reject
In which our nutriment has been prepar'd,
So anger spurn, and every thought unkind,
Unworthy of thy spouse, and by thy side,
Unblam'd, and unforbidden, let her stay.
O chide me not; for where the husband is,
Within the palace, on the stately car,
Or wandering in the air, in every state
The shadow of his foot in her abode.
My mother and my father having left,
I have no dwelling-place distinct from thee.
Forbid me not. For in the wilderness,
Hard of access, renounc'd by men, and fill'd
With animals and birds of various kind,
And savage tigers, I will surely dwell.
This horrid wilderness shall be to me
Sweet as my father's house and all the noise
Of the three worlds shall never interrupt
My duty to my lord. A gay recluse,
On thee attending, happy shall I feel
Within this honey-scented grove to roam,
For thou e'en here canst nourish and protect;
And therefore other friend I cannot need.
To-day most surely with thee I will go,
And thus resolved, I must not be deny'd.
Roots and wild fruit shall be my constant food
Nor will I, near thee, add unto thy cares,
Nor lag behind, nor forest-food refuse;
But fearless traverse ev'ry hill and dale,
Viewing the winding stream, the craggy rock,
And, stagnant at its base, the pool or lake.
In nature's deepest myst'ries thou art skill'd,
O hero—and I long with thee to view

Those sheets of water, fill'd with nymphœas,
Cover'd with ducks, and swans, and silvan fowl,
And studded with each wild and beauteous flow'r,
In these secluded pools I'll often bathe,
And share with thee, O Rama, boundless joy.
Thus could I sweetly pass a thousand years;
But without thee e'en heav'n would lose its charms.
A residence in heaven, O Raghuvu,
Without thy presence, would no joy afford.
Therefore, though rough the path, I must, I will,
The forest penetrate, the wild abode
Of monkeys, elephants, and playful fawn.
Pleas'd to embrace thy feet, I will reside
In the rough forest as my father's house.
Void of all other wish, supremely thine,
Permit me this request—I will not grieve
I will not burden thee—refuse me not.
But shouldst thou, Raghuvu, this prayer deny,
Know, I resolve on death—if torn from thee. (p. 408.)

To come more directly to the subject of this chapter, there is great difficulty in arriving at anything like a clear knowledge of the Hindu woman's religion. Books to which I have access do not help one much, and the Hindus themselves have very confused and conflicting ideas on the subject. I have consulted with learned native friends and others likely to have the best information, and that which is given here is as clear as it seems to me possible in anything so conflicting and confusing as Hinduism generally is.

The main question is, whether a woman can have any worship at all apart from her husband; and the answer is that she may and she may not. From the passage at the head of this chapter it will be seen that, as a rule, the woman has no religious status apart from her husband, and yet, as will be seen further on, she has a daily worship of her own, of a kind. This may be merely an unauthorized form of concession to the religious instincts of woman—a sort of thing allowed on sufferance as doing no harm to any one, though it may perhaps be of little good! This may be the case, and perhaps it had its origin in some such notion, but the fact remains that in the present day the woman has a little divine service of her own.

At the time of her marriage, at the marriage of her children, and at certain other periods and at some festivals, the wife must sit with her husband during the time he is engaged in the performance of certain acts of worship, though she seems to be there only as a kind of complement of her husband, and takes no active part in the ceremonies. If a man has lost his wife, he cannot perform any sacrifices by fire (*oupasana*), which shows that the wife has some indirect connection with the ceremony, and also in part accounts for the anxiety of a widower to remarry. The woman is a part of her husband and so she worships through him; what he does, she does. The *Yajur Veda* says:—

अर्धोवा एष आत्मनोयत्पत्नी ॥

The wife is half the self of her husband.

Upon this there is a comment by Brihaspati, somewhat as follows:—

It has been said that the wife is half the self of her husband, and in consequence she shares equally with him all the good and evil done by him.

But the question still remains whether the woman can ordinarily join her husband in his prayers and sacrifices; and to this the answer must be in the negative. At the midday service when the man performs the ceremonies before taking food, as described in the paper on *Nitya Karma*, the wife may attend upon him and hand him the things used by him, but she can take no real part with him. The woman is not a twice born (*dvija*); nor does she wear the sacred thread (*yagnōpavīta*) which is the mark of the second birth (*upanayana*); she cannot read the Vedas, or even hear them read; nor can she take part in her husband's sacred services (*dēvatārchana*): she is outside it all; in reality she has no religious life in common with her husband.

It may be well just to go through the ordinary day with a woman and see what she really does, as far as

it bears upon the subject. The women of the household are always the first to rise in the morning, and this is usually long before daybreak. The early morning duties, after the performance of personal ablutions, consist of cleaning up those parts of the house that cannot be entered by people of lower castes, and cleaning the drinking pots and the numerous vessels that are used in a more or less ceremonious manner in a Hindu household. During the performance of these duties, which must be entirely done by or shared in by every good housewife, she generally sings in a low tone some song which is intended to rouse up the god Krishna or Siva, as the case may be. Two specimens of the songs thus sung are here given. The first is from the Telugu, and is called *mēlukolupu,* or the waking up :—

AWAKE! AWAKE!

1. Awake! Awake! Krishna divine,
Awake to save thine own.
Thou lord of all, thou perfect one,
Grant us each heavenly boon.
Awake! Awake!

2. Awake! Awake! for Kings have come,
And Queens to thee adore.
They come to wave their ruly hands,
And praise thee ever more
Awake! Awake!

3. Awake! Awake! thou loveliest one,
That earth or heaven e'er knew
Thy faithful with petitions come,
Full grace to them renew
Awake! Awake!

4. Awake! Awake! Hari divine,
Thou god adored by all.
Thou free'st thine own from every foe,
And liftest those who fall
Awake! Awake!

5. Awake! Awake! both old and young
Their sorrows to remove.
Have sought thy holy presence now
Oh grant them every good
Awake! Awake!

6. Awake! Awake! with favour see
The faithful at thy feet.
Adored of Sanaka behold!
With grace each suppliant meet,
Awake! Awake!

7. Awake! Awake! e'en Parvati
Doth worship at thy shrine.
Oh grant to us our every need
Thine heart to us incline
Awake! Awake!

8. Awake! Awake! I wait to bring,
Sweet Jasmine flowers to wave.
Thyself rouse quickly Madhava!
Shrihari! come and save.
Awake! Awake!

The second specimen of these songs is taken from the Sanskrit. Many women of the upper classes learn some of these songs, even in Sanskrit, although, probably, they do not often understand much of the meaning. This one is called *Gopika Gíta or Song of the Nymphs.*

THE SONG OF THE NYMPHS.

1. Oh Krishna! Brundāvanam is
Made glorious by thy birth.
There Lakshmi sits for evermore,
As Queen of all the earth.

2. Thou cause of every good to men,
Our all, O God! is thine.
Come manifest thyself to us,
Thy heart to us incline.

3. Hari divine! thy story sweet
As nectar fills with joy.
'Tis praised by poets, loved by all;
And doeth each sin destroy.

4. To hear of thee, to know thy name,
Who fills the universe,
To sing thy praise, to learn of thee,
Is to be ever blest.

It should be mentioned that after her ablutions, the woman places upon her forehead the universally worn *tilakam* or mark with red powder made of saffron and other ingredients. The shape of the mark differs according to the deity worshipped by the wearer. Those, for instance, who worship Lakshmi

(the wife of Vishnu) have merely a circular spot in the centre of the forehead; whilst the followers of Gauri (the wife of Siva) have a horizontal mark. This mark is always worn except during days of mourning and other times of ceremonial uncleanness, as being without it is a sign of widowhood; and thus, whenever a woman washes her face, she must again renew the mark. The greater part of the forenoon is devoted to preparing the midday meal; and it may be mentioned that no food can be partaken of until after this cooking is done, as the partaking of food renders any one ceremoniously unfit either for cooking or for worship.

In a previous chapter we have described the ceremonies performed by the Hindu man before partaking of his first midday meal, and we have seen that much time is occupied in going through all that is necessary. The woman, too, has a kind of worship of her own before her midday meal, though it is of a comparatively simple character and occupies only a very short time. She has a metal box containing several images of brass or copper, representing various goddesses, usually Gauri or Lakshmi, or sometimes both of these, and perhaps an image of Subrahmanyam the snake god, who is worshipped only by women. None of these images are consecrated, for a woman must not even touch any image that has been consecrated. She may take the images out and place them on a low stool underneath the sacred canopy (*vitanam*) which is in the sacred room or sanctuary of every house; or perhaps keep them in the box and worship them there, still being under or near the canopy. A little lamp of ghee and wick is lit and placed near, and the worshipper says the *Sankalpam*, which must always preface worship, and which has been already described as consisting of mentioning the time and repeating the name of the place, and that of the family, and the tribe, as well as the personal name of the worshipper. After this she goes on to say some simple prayers asking for aid in any personal needs that may be pressing, or for divine help generally, and also a few words of praise,

all this accompanied by various bowings with clasped hands. The worshipper then proceeds to offer a bit of fruit, or sweetmeat, or betel, and to sprinkle the images with pinches of sandal paste and coloured rice, and perhaps a few flowers, sometimes also waving before them a bit of lighted camphor, at the same time ringing a little bell or striking a small gong. The whole is concluded by three times walking round the spot (*pradakshanam*) and by prostration (*sāshtānga namaskāram*). The whole ceremony, perhaps does not occupy as long in the doing as in the telling, and when it is over the things are replaced in the box, which is then put away in its own proper niche. Among certain sections of Hindus this midday worship is somewhat different. The *lingam* worshippers, for instance, merely light a little lamp, and taking in the left hand the *lingam* from its silver or copper box which is suspended from their neck, perform to it some slight worship and wave towards it from the food which is about to be consumed. Of course all these things differ slightly amongst different sections of the people, but for all intents and purposes this description may be taken as sufficiently representative. It may also be said that this midday worship is all the regular worship that the Hindu woman ordinarily engages in from day to day. At night, when she lights the family lamp, the good housewife will make obeisance to the flame with closed hands repeating the following Sanskrit verse :—

दीपं ज्योतिः परब्रह्म
दीपं ज्योतिः परायणं ।
दीपेन हरतेपापं
संध्यादीप नमोऽस्तुते ॥

The flame of this lamp is the Supreme God.
The flame of this lamp is the abode of the Supreme.
By this flame sin is destroyed.
O thou light of the evening we praise thee.

The woman does no worship at the time of the evening meal as do the men; she simply says, as a kind of grace before meat, the words Govinda! Govinda! (a name of Vishnu) or Mahādēva! Mahādēva! (an appellation of Siva) as the case may be, before putting the first morsel into her mouth.

As in Christian countries the good mother takes her little ones and teaches them her holy faith according to their capacity to understand, and also teaches them to pray at her knee, so the Hindu mother tells her children stories of the gods she has learned from the *Rāmāyanam* and the *Mahābhāratam* and other religious books, and at worship time, when the little bell is sounded, the children are taught to assemble, and, solemnly placing their hands together, make obeisance to the gods.

It will be seen that practically a Hindu woman's worship is ordinarily confined to the brief midday service described above. Even this she is only supposed to do on sufferance, after having obtained the consent of her husband. A passage on this subject is quoted from the *Padma Purāna* :—

पतिरेव प्रियः स्त्रीणां
ब्रह्मादिभ्योऽपि सर्वशः ।
आत्मानंच स्वभर्तारि
मेकपिंडमनीषया ।
भर्तुराज्ञां विना नैव
कंचिद्धर्मं समाचरेत् ॥

The husband is the beloved of the wife.
He is more to her than all the gods.
Herself and her husband
Be it known are one person.
Without the consent of her husband
Any kind of worship she must not perform.

With the consent of her husband a wife may, and perhaps does, go on a short pilgrimage without him

when he is unable to accompany her; but this is very seldom. And also, strictly with his consent, she may perform and keep vows, as for instance, to do without salt in her food for a stated period or to abstain from milk or various kinds of eatables for a given time, all with the object of obtaining something desired—wealth, or children, or deliverance from disease, for herself or any one dear to her.

We have seen that, apart from her husband, the woman has no religious status whatever, and practically very little even with him. We now come to the important question as to how all this affects her state after death. Does the union and interdependence of husband and wife continue after death, and how can the one affect the other? There is good authority for the monstrous assertion, which however is, in itself, exactly in accordance with the whole of Hindu legislation and custom, as far as can be clearly made out, that whilst the good deeds of the wife can materially benefit the husband, as to his eternal state, nothing that he does, or can do, will have any effect upon her; she stands or falls by her own merits alone. If she has been a bad woman, she must expiate her sins by numerous transmigrations, and she may be cast into the purgatorial hell.

I am aware that this matter is sometimes put in another light by writers on the subject. Ward, for instance, says:—"The merits and demerits of husband and wife are transferable to either in a future state: if a wife perform many meritorious works, and the husband die first, he will enjoy heaven as the fruit of his wife's virtuous deeds; and if the wife be guilty of many wicked actions, and the husband die first, he will suffer for the sins of his wife. In the apprehensions of a Hindu, therefore, marriage ought to be a very serious business." (Vol. I. p. 184.) Though I can find no authority for the first clause of this statement, the quotation from Brihaspati already given, shows that there may have been some such idea in ancient Vedic days. Howbeit, a Pundit friend says that whilst this quotation may express the state of things in a former *Yuga*, it certainly does not apply

to this degenerate period of the world's history; and the following, which is taken from the code of Parāsara, the most modern of the three great codes, speaks to the contrary. The code of Parāsara belongs to the present age, or *Kaliyuga*, and is of very great authority.

योषित्कृतापराधेन पुरुषस्य
यथाप्रत्यवाय: तथापुरुषा
नुष्ठितेन धर्मेण योषितोऽपि
निष्कृतिर्भवतीति न शंकनीयं ॥

पतिलोकं न सा याति
ब्राह्मणी या सुरां पिबेत् ।
इहैव सा शुनी भूत्वा
सूकरीवोपजायते ॥

या ब्राह्मणी दुष्टा भवति
तां देवा: पितृलोकं न नयंति ।
इहैवसा भवति क्षीणपुण्या
आस्योल्का पिशाची भवति ॥

We have here a question put by Parāsara, and the answer he himself gives.

Why, it may be asked, is the wife not benefited by the good deeds of her husband just as the husband becomes hell-doomed by the evil deeds of his wife? The idea that the wife can be so benefited must not for a moment be entertained.

In support of this he gives a quotation from Yāgnavalkya, a celebrated Rishi, to the following effect:—

To her husbands world she will not go.
Whatever brahmin woman drinks fermented liquor,
She will be born again into the world a dog;
And after that she will born a pig.

Upon this Parāsara makes the following comment :—

Whatever Brahmin woman becomes bad, she will by the gods be kept out of the ancestral heaven. Such a woman, being without merit, will be born again on this earth as a demon with a mouth emitting flames of fire.

The Pundits of the present day appear to take these quotations as a proof that a bad woman cannot be benefited by the good deeds of her husband, and this seems to be their belief on the subject. If the woman is a dutiful wife she may obtain a share of the celestial bliss of her husband and also her good deeds may be reckoned to his account even though he is not a good man; but if she be a bad woman, nothing that her husband, or any one else can do will be for her of any avail.

We now come to deal with the Hindu woman as a widow, for her condition as regards religion becomes materially changed after the death of her husband. Although the widow is precluded from taking any part whatever in the ordinary family rites and ceremonies, and although she may be reckoned as dead to all social life, still she can, according to Hinduism, materially assist her husband after his death and by her prayers and good deeds hasten his final beatitude. It is laid down that the chief way in which she can do this is by ascending his funeral pile and burning herself alive with his dead body. Happily the Government will no longer allow these religious murders and suicides, but there is no doubt whatever that they were formerly carried out to an enormous extent, and, if the strong hand of British law were removed, it is most probable that these monstrous cruelties would be again perpetrated. A quotation on this subject is here taken from Ward's book on the Mythology of the Hindus; he takes it from the writings of Angira, a saint of the first and most holy age (*Krutayugam*). Other passages from Hindu authors of authority might be quoted, but this one is enough to show what the Hindu religion says on this point as to the sacred duty of women.

"There are," it is stated, "35,000,000 of hairs on the human body. The woman who ascends the pile with her husband, will remain so many years in heaven.—As the snake-catcher draws the serpent from its hole, so she rescuing her husband (from hell), rejoices with him.—The woman who expires on the funeral pile with her husband purifies the family of her mother, her father, and her husband.—If the husband be a Brahminicide, an ungrateful person, or a murderer of his friend, the wife by burning with him purges away his sins.—There is no virtue greater than a virtuous woman's burning herself with her husband.—No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women, at any time after the death of their lords, except casting themselves into the same fire.—As long as a woman, in her successive transmigrations, shall decline burning herself, like a faithful wife, on the same fire with her deceased lord, so long shall she not be exempted from springing again to life in the body of some female animal." (Vol. III. p. 308).

The same writer also quotes as follows from the *Brahma Purāna*:—

If the husband be out of the country when he dies, let the virtuous wife take his slippers (or any thing else which belongs to his dress), and binding them (or it) on her breast, after purification, enter a separate fire. (Vol. III. p. 309.)

In the event of *sati* or self immolation not being performed, the widow may effect her husband's final good by a strict following out of the rules and regulations laid down by authority for such cases. I can find no authoritative statement on this point, but it is a generally entertained opinion amongst Hindus. They say that the general drift of the following quotations from Manu, and similar declarations by other authors, is to that effect. The tendency of all the legislation on the subject appears to be towards influencing or terrorising the woman into complete and abject submission to her husband; this is her religion, and only by following out these injunctions can she hope for merit here or for happiness hereafter. Not only for life is this submission to be

manifested, but even death does not dissolve the bonds, as far as she is concerned; all her hopes for the future lie in her continually manifesting by a life of the most intense misery her faithfulness to the memory of her lord and master.

A faithful wife who wishes to attain in heaven the mansion of her husband, must do nothing unkind to him be he living or dead.

Let her emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruits; but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man.

Let her continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing hard duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one husband.

A virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if, after the decease of her lord, she devote herself to pious austerity. (v. 156-158, 160.)

This of the woman. A little further on the law is thus laid down for the man:—

Having thus kindled sacred fires and performed funeral rites to his wife, who died before him, he may marry again and again light the nuptial fire. (v. 168.)

It is not necessary here to dwell upon the miseries of Hindu widowhood, this is touched upon in the paper on Hindu Funerals and also it is a subject of which much is generally known. Our task here has been to give some notion of what the religion and religious life of a Hindu woman really consist, and it is hoped that a fair general idea may be gathered on the subject from what has been said. It is perhaps hardly necessary to mention that all here brought forward has to do with the females of the upper castes. As for the lower castes and the outcastes, there is very little to be said; their religion, as a rule, is little more than demonolatry or fetichism, and that very often, of the lowest kind. The women are very particular to put upon their foreheads the red mark before spoken of, but of ordinary worship throughout

the day there is practically none at all, and this may be said of the men as well as of the women. They are all intensely superstitious, and those of them who may be Vaishnavas (worshippers of Vishnu) and who wear upon the forehead the mark of that deity, do, when they put on the marks in the early morning, both men and women, make obeisance to the rising sun, but that seems to be the sum total of the ordinary daily worship. It is a universal custom at night, when the family lamp is lit, for the women to make obeisance to the flame, but there does not appear to be anything else in the shape of evening worship. In any time of trouble or sickness, especially during the prevalence of any epidemic like cholera or small-pox, or at marriages and other festal seasons, and on the occasion of any family event, worship of various kinds is performed, chiefly by the women. The Sudras and those of the like class, will go to the village temple with offerings of fruit and flowers and coloured powder for the temple deity, which, after being presented, are distributed to the neighbours who may be present. The non-caste women, who may not go to the village temple at such seasons adorn a bit of the inner wall of the house with cowdung or saffron, upon which are drawn white or red horizontal lines, and to this obeisance is made and simple offerings of cooked food and fruit or flowers are presented. Besides this there is the sacred tree, and the simple village idol, often a mere group of shapeless stones, and to these worship will be made at certain times, by the village women. Sometimes also they will go to festivals or on a pilgrimage to some shrine that may be within their reach; but of ordinary worship, in the usual acceptation of the word, there is very little, if any at all, amongst these lower castes and non-castes. They are strong believers in transmigration, and they think that their future birth will be affected by their good or evil deeds, but, practically, they may be said to have very little religion at all, as distinct from intense superstition and belief in demonolatry of the most degrading kind.

It will have been gathered, from what has been said, how low a position is assigned to women in Hindu

theology, and one can only wonder that long ere this she has not broken the shackles that would bind her very soul, and asserted her equality in the eyes of God. There is, however, hope that a change for the better in this respect is really being effected. India is gradually waking up from her long lethargy, and the women of India also are being affected. It may be true that, of the vast mass, comparatively few women, as yet, are reached by the rays of light that are beginning to penetrate even into the inner recesses of Indian homes; but enough has been done, and sufficient evidence is manifest to prove that the new life has begun. Almost imperceptible though it may be to those who are accustomed to look only upon the surface, signs are manifest enough to those who are in a position to judge, of the setting in of the tide which is to bring brightness into the life, and hope for after death to the gentle suffering women of India. This movement may appear but feeble at present, but it is going on, and it cannot now be stayed; the hand of God is here, and His handiwork is irresistible as the inflowing tide. The whole future of India's greatness is bound up in the emancipation of her women; and this, we believe, can only be done effectually by the spread of that Divine faith which alone, of all the creeds of the earth, gives woman her true status as the equal with and true complement of man, and which thus makes declaration on this matter :—

The woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. . . . . . . Neither is the man without the woman; neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. (1 Cor. xi. 7-9, 11, 12.)

# CHAPTER V.

## THE HINDU SACRED THREAD.

### यज्ञोपवीतं. (Yajnōpavītam).

In the eighth year from the conception of a Brāhman, in the eleventh from that of a Kshatriya, and in the twelfth from that of a Vaisya, let the father invest the child with the mark of his class. (Manu II. 36.)

One of the many peculiarities that strike a stranger in India is that many Hindus, and those evidently of the upper classes, have a cord or skein of thread over the left shoulder, and hanging down under the right arm, worn as a sash would be. Probably few, except the Hindus themselves, could tell why this cord is worn; why certain have it whilst others have it not; or even how, or of what it is made. This article of dress or adornment forms, however, a very important factor in the Hindu cult. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, and perhaps it may be instructive, to give a few particulars connected with this mark or badge of religions and social rank.

The Yajnōpavītam, as it is called, or the sacred thread of the Hindu, is the outward and visible mark of the wearer being a *Dvija*, or twice born; and it is a much prized, and very sacred badge that commands respect, and even adoration.

It may be well, perhaps, first to enquire as to who are privileged to assume this distinction; and here we find the matter very clearly defined by the ancient Hindu law-giver. In the quotation at the head of this chapter, it is clear that the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas must be thus invested; and in another place it is distinctly stated that none but the three twice-born classes are entitled to the distinction :—

The three twice-born classes are the sacerdotal, the military, and the commercial; but the fourth, or servile, is once-born, *that is, has no second birth from the gāyatri, and wears no thread.* Nor is there a fifth pure class. (X. 4.)

This is the law as clearly laid down; but, as a matter of fact, others besides these three privileged classes assume the distinction. It is not safe, therefore, to conclude that every wearer of the sacred thread must, necessarily, be a Brahmin or one of the other two highest castes. The Goldsmiths, for instance, and the Weavers, besides certain classes of fishermen, and others wear it. Here then is a point that needs some explanation. The Goldsmith caste, many of whom are carpenters, and workers in brass and copper, are themselves a class of Brahmins; at least they assume the distinction. As a matter of fact they have their own prescribed share in the Vedas and their own ritual. They have an *upanayanam* or second-birth ceremony, and are considered *dvijas*, or twice born; hence this privilege in the matter of the thread, as well as in many others that are peculiar to Brahmins. The Goldsmith caste are said to be the descendants of Brahmin women and Kshatriya men; and this fact, together with the rights above mentioned, appears to be acknowledged by the Brahmins themselves; yet, strange to say, perhaps as a result of their mixed origin, they do not appear to command much respect as a caste; or to command that esteem which, judging from their privileges, one would expect. Until recent years, for instance, they were not allowed to celebrate their marriages with public processions; or to use a palanquin; or ride a horse. It is said that about thirty years ago there was much disturbance in Masulipatam when, through the freedom resulting from the British raj, this caste first began to have marriage processions, and, in other ways, to assert themselves. Now it is an acknowledged thing; it has become *māmūl* (custom), and no one interferes. They are not, as a rule, even now, allowed to enter temples; and when they are permitted to do so, it is only to that part in which Sudras are allowed. A case recently came before the law courts in Masulipatam, arising out of the attempt of a Goldsmith to enter a Siva Temple for worship. I believe it was eventually decided that a member of this caste could not enter a temple, except by permission of the

Brahmin priest in charge. I do not pretend to give any opinion on the moot point of the social and religious status of the Goldsmith caste; it is a most vexed question, and one that gives rise to much controversy; the point is merely alluded to here to show that not all wearers of the thread or cord are considered of equal rank.

It may not be uninteresting to make a slight digression here, and say a little as to this denial of the liberty of the subject to dress or go as he pleases. There are very binding rules and regulations on these points; the outcome of caste customs, that, whatever may be the real rights of the matter, from a legal point of view, are very real and strict in actual life. Theoretically, for example, any one British subject has the right to use the public road in the way and manner of others, whatever may be his degree; but, practically, this is not so. A low caste man, in going through a respectable public street, that is a street inhabited by high-caste people, must take off his shoes and turban and shut up his umbrella, if he be well-to-do enough to possess these articles, and, if he should be riding, he must descend from his horse and humbly walk through on foot. Even if a Sudra should be riding and happen to pass a superior person, as a Pandit, or high official, or any other like personage, he must descend and walk past on foot until he is well past the dignitary, when he may remount and go on his way. A case quite recently came before the law court in this neighbourhood where a native pastor of one of the Christian bodies was severely beaten because he dared to ride through a, so called, respectable public thoroughfare where, as a man of low caste origin, he should have acknowledged his servile status, and humbly descended, and gone through on foot. Such is the power of custom; especially when the custom is so agreeable to the inner consciousness of the powers that be—those who have the ability, as well as the desire, to see it carried into effect.

To return, however, to the subject more immediately in hand, the others as the weavers and fishermen appear unlawfully to assume the privilege of wearing

the sacred thread; but, although their custom is not interfered with, no value is set upon it by orthodox Hindus. They cannot, for example, read the Vedas, or even hear them read. Authority to do this, in the case of lawful thread wearers, is conveyed by the ceremony of Upanayanam, or second spiritual birth, of which the thread is the outward symbol. In these modern days, some other classes of Sudras have also adopted the yajnōpavītam merely to add to their own importance; but, in all such cases, it is of no true religious value and is merely aping at a condition to which the wearers have no true title. I have heard of a case in the Orissa country where a certain Raja of the Sudra caste, some time ago made himself important by assuming authority to invest people of his own caste with the thread. Some of them, to please him, appear to have submitted to the investiture, and adopt the thread—thus adding to the number of the unlawful wearers of this coveted mark of distinction. It is said that one unlucky wight who, on a visit to that country, was presented with this badge of honour, was, on his return home, deprived of the same, and well beaten for his presumption by his indignant neighbours—thus meeting with something like the fate of the ass in the fable who was dressed in the skin of a lion. I am given to understand that, in other parts of India, there are other castes who, though neither Brahmins nor Vaisyas, have some title to the thread and its accompanying privileges, as in the case of the Goldsmith caste above alluded to. For instance, the Vaidyas, the native doctor caste of Bengal, appear to enjoy this honour. They are said to have sprung from the union of a Brahmin with a female Vaisya and hence this privilege. It must however be borne in mind that, in these sketches, we are looking at things chiefly from the point of view of South India in general and the Circars in particular.

Having thus seen who are entitled to wear the sacred thread, it may be well to mention some particulars of the thing itself and also of the mode of investiture. Originally there appears to have been

some difference in the kind of thread worn, according to the class of the wearer.

> The sacrificial thread of a Brahman must be made of cotton, so as to be put on over his head, in three strings; that of a Kshatriya, of sana thread only; that of a Vaisya of woollen thread. (Manu II. 44.)

This is the law; and probably in ancient times the material of which the thread was made did thus differ, according to the caste of the wearer; but, certainly, in the present day no such difference is seen. The cord is universally made of cotton. A peculiar kind of very fine cotton is what ought to be employed; but, ordinarily, the common cotton is used. The threads are supposed to be prepared by Brahmins. Perhaps other than the Brahmins, and Vaisyas are not so particular as to the manufacture; but these two castes, certainly, are very careful in this respect. They are generally to be obtained in any ordinary bazar; but the very orthodox will frequently procure their supply from the house of the Brahmins who may happen to be engaged in the manufacture, and thus ensure purity. We say the Brahmins and Vaisyas or merchant caste, are thus particular; as for the Kshatriyas, unless we allow the claim of the Rājputs to be of this ancient warrior caste, they are practically extinct. Parasurāma, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, is said to have annihilated the Kshatriyas. The cost of a thread is very insignificant a few pice sufficing to purchase a complete one.

The *yajnōpavītam* consists of several skeins of cotton thread; each thread consists of three strands, each skein has three threads, and a married man's cord must consist of not less than three skeins. Thus it will be seen that the number three enters very largely into the structure of the cord itself, and the ceremony of investiture. This is said to represent the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; the three sacrificial fires; three divisions of time—morn, noon, and night; and the three worlds—heaven, earth and hell. Each skein is tied with a peculiar knot called Brahma's

knot. It is made by making three turns with the threads and so tying the knot that the ends do not appear on the outside. In making each knot the following incantation is repeated by the maker :—

ओं कारमुच्चरन् ब्रह्म-
सूत्रं बध्वाथ धारयेत् ।
कर्मशुद्धित्वमाप्नोति
सर्वदेवात्मकत्वतः ॥

Pronouncing the word Om, the Brahma
Sutram must be tied, and afterwards worn
(The wearer) will receive purity in all his rites,
It being the personification of all the gods.

The youth when first invested with the cord being only a bachelor, receives only a single skein, and he cannot wear more than a single skein until he is married, when he must wear at least, three skeins, although he may wear five. Usually, young married men wear three skeins, and the elders five. It is not lawful to wear more than five; at least it is not customary. The Brahmin youth as we have seen, must be invested with his cord at about seven or eight years of age; he cannot be married until thus invested, but he may, and in fact often does, marry within a day or two, of the ceremony. Amongst some of the Banians or Vaisyas, it is customary to defer the Upanayanam until immediately before marriage; so that if a young man does not marry until he is twenty or thirty years of age, he is not invested with the cord until that time.

The ceremony of investiture may be briefly described as follows. On the appointed day a fire is lighted, round which are seated the relatives and friends of the novice. This fire is a very important feature of the Upanayanam; indeed the whole ceremony is called the *Agni Kāryam* or fire worship. It is kept alight during the whole four days during which the ceremony lasts; and it is the proper thing to feed

it, as far as possible, with the twigs of certain kinds of trees—principally those of the Indian fig tribe. At the repeating of the various mantrams which form part of the ritual, ghee is poured on to the fire as an offering. The father of the youth to be invested takes a thread of nine strands, and puts it upon his son. This is not the true Yajnōpavītam nor has it the Brahma knot, neither are mantrams said over it. After some time, during which various rites are performed, and the ears of the boy are bored for ear rings, the ears being then adorned with thin rings of gold, the true cord is produced—a single skein of three threads. To this is attached a bit of the skin of a male deer; or if procurable, a long strip of this skin is used to be worn as a sash, together with the cord. Deer skin is considered to be very pure and also to be capable of imparting purity; for this reason untanned deer skin is much employed for covering the boxes, and other receptacles, in which are kept the household gods, and things pertaining thereto. It is also much used as a mat to sit upon when performing the daily rites, and at other like periods. Mention is made in the *smritis* (the teaching of the Sages) of the purity acquired by wearing deer skin; and there are several injunctions on the matter in the laws of Manu for instance. For example :—

> Let the student in theology wear for their mantles, the hides of black antelopes, of common deer or of goats, with lower vests of woven sana of cshumā and of wool, in the direct order of their classes. (II. 41.)

It may be here mentioned that the bit of deer skin is kept attached to and worn with the thread for several months, when it is taken off, with some short ceremony, at a temple.

On the father putting on the true cord, he repeats the Yajnōpavītam mantram—the novice saying it after him. This mantram is as follows :—

यज्ञोपवीतं परमं पवित्रं

प्रजापतेर्यत्सहजं पुरस्तात् ।

आयुष्यमग्र्यं प्रतिमुंच शुभ्रं
यज्ञोपवीतं बलमस्तु तेजः ॥

This most hallowed yajnōpavītam,
In former times with Brahma born,
Author of longevity; wear it, it is pure,
May this yajnōpavītam become my strength and glory.

As the new and true cord is put on, the imitation one, which was first used is taken off. This completes the investiture; and the father, at once, proceeds to teach the novice the Gāyatri prayer. This is done with great care and secrecy. A cloth is thrown over the heads of both father and son, and, thus covered up, the sacred words are whispered into the ears, in as low a whisper as possible, so that the holy words may not fall upon the ears of any uninitiated one, who might possibly be within hearing distance. The Upanayanam is now complete; and the newly received is a true *dvija*, duly entitled to read the Vedas, and to perform any of the religious rites of his caste.

Immediately following this investiture the youth proceeds to ask alms of those present, beginning with his mother, and then his father, and afterwards the other relatives or friends; this act is supposed to intimate a readiness, on the part of the supplicant, to provide for himself and his religious preceptor. All this takes place on the first day, and the true religious act is by this completed; but for three more days the festival is kept up, during which the novice is instructed in the morning, midday, and evening prayers, and other ceremonials; and also various sacrifices are performed at stated times. There is always much feasting and rejoicing upon these occasions—musicians are hired to enliven the company; and friends and relatives are entertained according to the ability of the host.

A new cord must be put on every year on the occasion of a certain festival. This festival is called *Srāvanālapaurnavami*—the full moon in the month of Srāvana (July-August). Should the cord be broken

during the year, a new one must at once be put on. If a man has a cord of five skeins, a broken thread or two does not matter; but a bachelor must have his one skein perfect, without even a single thread being broken, and a married person must have at least three perfect skeins every thread of which must be perfect. There are also certain kinds of defilement, as for instance touching a Pariah, that necessitate putting on a new thread and casting away the old one. In these days, perhaps even the orthodox are not so very particular as this; but still, this is as it should be, according to rule. Any replacing of the old thread by a new one must be done with certain ceremonies. Should the cord become broken, or any defilement contracted, no food can be taken until the old one is replaced by a new.

Suppose a strict orthodox Brahmin, in passing through the bazaar, accidentally comes in contact with a Pariah, for instance, or in any other way becomes ceremonially defiled, he must get a new cork. He will proceed home, and a cord is sent for; but he cannot touch the new cord himself until he has bathed, and thus purified himself from the defilement. After bathing he takes the new cord, and dipping it into water, spreads it out on two brass or copper vessels. He then touches it with some of the pigment he uses for putting the sacred mark on his forehead. After that he walks round the vessels three times, from right to left, repeating the Gāyatri prayer (vide page 42). Then he takes the cord, skein by skein, and puts it on saying the mantram or consecration prayer, used at the first investiture, repeating the same for each skein.

When he has thus put on the whole of the skeins, he takes off the old cord, repeating a mantram which is the same exactly as the above except the last line which says :—

May this old yajnōpavītam become my strength and glory.

The old thread is disposed of by throwing it into

a river or some other water, if there should be any at hand. For what says the ancient lawgiver :—

> His girdle, his leather mantle, his staff, his sacrificial cord, and his ewer, he must throw into the water, when they are worn out or broken, and receive others hallowed by mystical texts. (Manu II. 64).

Should no river, or other suitable water, as a large tank, be conveniently near, the old thread is rolled up and thrown on to the top of the house; this is to prevent its being trodden under foot, on in any other such way defiled. This completes the reinvestiture; the defiled one is now ceremonially pure, and he can proceed to perform the daily rites which must be gone through before he can partake of food.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the thread is usually worn over the left shoulder, hanging down across the body under the right arm, and, as the orthodox Hindu is not encumbered with much by way of covering for the upper part of his person, it forms a very noticeable object. On certain occasions, however, the position of the thread is changed; at the time of performing the annual ceremony for deceased ancestors, the position is exactly reversed. It is then placed over the right shoulder and hangs down on the left side. On certain other occasions, it is worn as a garland round the neck; whilst at others it is placed up over the ears to prevent its being defiled. Usually when saying the Gāyatri prayer, the thread is taken hold of by the thumb; and on reciting various mantrams it is used somewhat as a rosary—the worshipper winding it round the fingers to keep count of the number of times the mantram is repeated. The ancient law-giver Manu, makes various allusions to the sacred thread other than those quoted above. He speaks of the sinfulness of omitting the sacred investiture (xi. 63.); and he lays down the rule that no one must use a sacerdotal string that has been before used by another (iv. 66). He also legislates upon the respect due to the one who invests with this mark of sanctity; classing him with father, and mother as worthy of honour.

Him by whom he was invested with the sacrificial thread, him who explained the Vēda or even a part of it, his mother, and his father, natural or spiritual, let him never oppose; nor priests, nor cows, nor persons truly devout. (iv. 162).

It will be thus seen how very important is the Yajnōpavītam is to the Hindu. It is, in fact, an all important thing, being the sign of the second or spiritual birth. Without his cord the Brahmin is not a Brahmin; he is nothing better than an outcaste; he cannot perform any ceremony or partake of any food, nay, he must not even swallow his own spittle; he may breathe, and that is about all he can do until the lost or defiled cord is duly replaced with all proper ceremony.

It may be mentioned in conclusion, that in the case of a Sanyāsi, as he has entered the fourth or last stage of the Brahmin's life, the cord is not worn.

# CHAPTER VI.

## THE HINDU SACRED MARKS.

### पुंड्रम्. (Pundram).

He who has no right to distinguishing marks, yet gains a subsistence by wearing false mark of distinction, takes to himself the sin committed by those who are entitled to such marks, and shall again be born from the womb of a brute animal (Manu iv. 200).

It is not our intention in this chapter to attempt anything like an explanation or description of the many and diverse Hindu Sects, with their divisions and sub-divisions, for that would require volumes rather than pages. Our purpose is rather to give a more or less popular account of the various sacred marks which the Hindus smear upon their faces, and other parts of their person. Anything further than this will only be so much as may appear necessary to illustrate the main subject, and present as clear a view of the same as these complicated matters will admit.

The proverbial lack of information amongst Anglo-Indians on these and kindred subjects, is not perhaps so much to be wondered at when one knows the ignorance on their own ritual that exists amongst the Hindus themselves. The bulk of the people follow the customs of their fathers, and of those around them, without caring to enquire the reason why or wherefore of this or that; it is *mámúl* (custom), and that is enough to enforce obedience to laws and regulations so very varied and peculiar. It is a treat, in one sense of the word, though perhaps trying to the patience, to get hold of a regular old fashioned orthodox Brahmin, and draw out from him any information required upon any point of every day Hinduism. The trouble is well repaid in such cases, for, though every thing elicited may not agree with

ancient theory as described in text books on Hinduism, it is the best way of getting a practical knowledge of the ordinary things of religious life and ritual.

No mention is made in the Védas of the *Pundrams* or sacred marks, but the *Smrities* and *Purânams* take particular notice of them. Since, however, the Smrities are based upon the Vedas, it is inferred that some parts of the Vedas are now lost, and that those lost portions probably contain the injunctions on this point.

It is said that these sacred marks were originally intended to distinguish the four castes; but however that may be, it is clear that in the present day they are used to distinguish the members of the various religious sects or divisions.

All Hindus may roughly be divided into the worshippers of Vishnu and the worshippers of Siva. These however much they may differ in general, agree pretty much in some main points, and they are all good Hindus; indeed a man may leave the one sect and join the other, if he so desires it, and can at the same time bear the cost of the necessary ceremonies. Brahma, the first person in the Hindu Triad (*Trimúrti*), is not, as a matter of fact, worshipped at all. Vishnu and Siva, in their various forms and incarnations, are the real objects of Hindu worship.

Perhaps a more important point, even, than the gods worshipped, is the three chief schools of philosophy, of some one of which all Hindus may be said to be followers. The first is that of *Advaita* or non-dualism. "The Universe exists, but merely as a form of the one eternal Essence. All animate and inanimate things are but parts of the deity, and have no real existence of their own." Then comes the *Dvaita* doctrine, or dualism, which holds that "God is supreme, yet essentially different from the human soul, and from the material world, both of which have a real and eternally distinct existence." A third and important section hold the doctrine of *Visishtādvaita*, or doctrine of unity with attributes. This doctrine is like that of Advaita, holding that the Deity and the universe are one, but it goes further in

holding that the deity is not void of form or quality; it regards him as "being endowed with all good qualities and a two-fold form; the supreme spirit *Paramātma*, or cause, and the gross one, the effect, the Universe or matter." (*Wilson.*)

It will be seen further on that it was necessary to make this digression on Hindu doctrines, as a preliminary to the main topic upon which we must now enter.

The sacred marks that most intrude themselves upon one's notice, are those worn upon the forehead, and these are ordinarily of two kinds; the trident shaped mark called *Urdhva pundram* or upright pundram, which is universally worn by the votaries of Vishnu, and the three horizontal lines drawn across the forehead which are called *Tiryak pundram* or horizontal pundram, worn by the worshippers of Siva.

Besides these marks on the forehead some are also worn on various parts of the body, the number differing according to *caste;* the Brahmins having no less than twelve, *viz.* one on each arm and shoulder, one on the front and one on the back of the neck, one on the breast, and one on the middle of the back, three on different parts of the stomach, and the one on the forehead; a thirteenth is sometimes worn on the crown of the head. Others than Brahmins should not, theoretically, have so many marks, it being laid down that the Kshatriyas should have only four; the Vaisyas two, and the Sudras one, the one on the forehead; but practically many others besides Brahmins, if they wish to be very religious, wear these marks on most of the parts mentioned; but this is said, by the powers that be in such matters, to have no religious effect or value.

The forehead mark is, however, the chief and most prominent one. That of the worshippers of Vishnu is most unmistakable, and when put on by the very orthodox in extra broad stripes, has a most ferocious effect. The ordinary Vaishnava uses a white clay called *tirumani* which is found in various parts of the country and is sold, made up into sticks or lumps, at a very cheap rate in the ordinary bazaars. In the case of the

*Madhvas*, however, of whom particular mention will be made further on, the clay used in making the marks is of a yellowish colour, and is called *Gōpīchandanam*, which, to be of the purest kind, should be brought from Dwāraka in Guzerāt. Practically, however, it is obtained wherever it can be found. The marks are put on by the ordinary Vaishnavas in this manner; the clay is rubbed in the palm of the left hand with a little water, and then with a finger of the right hand, or with a strip of metal kept for the purpose, the moistened clay is taken and a broad line drawn across from the centre of one eyebrow to that of the other; then from the centre, or the outer end of each eyebrow, a perpendicular streak is drawn right up the forehead. This mark is said to represent the foot of Vishnu (*Vishnu Pādam*). In the centre of the two perpendicular lines, and in a line with the nose, a third, but narrower, perpendicular streak is drawn, of a red or yellow colour; the colour is chosen red or yellow according to fancy, but yellow is said to be the most orthodox. This central mark is in honour of Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu, and is called *Srīchūrnam*, the whole forming a trident. The marks on the other parts of the body are also made with three perpendicular streaks, two white and one red or yellow, but they are not so carefully made as those on the forehead, which are often drawn in quite an artistic manner, and evidently done with great care. As a rule these body marks are merely a broad smear of white with a coloured dab in the middle, though the one on the chest is perhaps sometimes seen to be more carefully made.

All the wearers of this trident mark are worshippers of Vishnu, but they may be either worshippers of that deity alone, as the Rāmānujas, or they may be votaries of Vishnu and at the same time pay honour to Siva. The followers of Rāmānuja are called amongst the Telugus *Āchāryas* and amongst the Tamils they are called *Iyengars*. Some of the Smartha sect, that is those who professedly worship Siva in particular, and yet pay reverence to Vishnu, also wear the trident marks of Vishnu, instead of the Siva

marks which is usually worn by the Smarthas. The Rāmānujas, which sect was founded in the 12th century by Rāmānujāchārya, hold the Visishtādvaita doctrine, and they are very hostile to the worshippers of Siva, who are of the Advaita School. They carry their love for their sacred mark to an extraordinary length. They imprint their trident on the portals of their doors, on the walls of their houses, nay, on their very household utensils, and on their carts and boats and books, &c. In the same way they allow their dislike for the Saivas to run to extremes. If they come across a stone in a mouthful of rice, a very unpleasant thing, as can be easily imagined, they call it the Lingam (the emblem of Siva) and say "Let us bite well, we have at least killed one wretched Lingam." It is also a saying that, even if pursued by a tiger, a Rāmānuja would not, even to save himself, enter into a Siva temple!

It may be interesting to mention here that the Vaishnavas are divided into two great sects, the *Vadagalais* and the *Tengalais*, the doctrines of which differ very materially from each other. The members of these sects may be distinguished by the shape of the mark worn. The Tengalais carry the white mark some way down the nose, whilst the Vadagalais have it without this central prolongation.

Whilst preparing the clay to daub on the marks, the devout are supposed to recite several mantrams which it may be interesting to quote at length.

मृत्तिके हन मे पापं
यन्मया दुष्कृतं कृतं ।
मृत्तिके ब्रह्मदत्तासि
काश्यपेनाभिमंत्रिता ॥

O Earth! do thou destroy my sin,
Whatever sin has been committed by me.
O Earth! thou gift of Brahma,
Thou hast been purified with mantrams by Kasyapa
(a certain Sage.)

मृत्तिके देहि मे पुष्टिं
त्वयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं ।
त्वया हतेन पापेन
गच्छामि परमां गतिं ॥

O Earth ! bestow on me physical strength,
In thee are all things comprised,
When my sin is driven out by thee
I attain unto heaven.

श्वेतमृद्देवि पापघ्नि
विष्णुदेहसमुद्भवे ।
चक्रांकिते नमस्तेऽस्तु
धारणान्मुक्तिदाभव ॥

Oh white clay goddess ! destroyer of sin,
Sprung from the body of Vishnu,
And symbolized by the Chakram, I adore thee,
Through my wearing thee do thou bestow heaven.

These three mantrams should be said by all worshippers of Vishnu, that is by all those who wear the trident; but only the very devout do say them. Many content themselves with saying only the first, others again will repeat only the first line of the first mantram :—

Oh Earth ; do thou destroy my sin.

Probably a very large number say nothing at all. These simply put on the marks for appearance sake, as a matter of form ; or perhaps with the idea that the mere marks themselves will have some religious effect upon their soul, for the Hindu is extremely superstitious.

The white marks having been daubed on the various parts of the body before indicated, the red

or yellow pigment (*Srīchūrnam*) is taken and put on whilst the following mantram is repeated :—

श्रीचूर्णं श्रीकरं दिव्यं
श्रियश्चांगसमुद्भवं ।
पुंड्रद्वयस्य मध्ये तु
धार्यं मोक्षार्थिभिर्नरैः ॥

Srichurnam is wealth giving, is excellent,
Generated from the body of Lakshmi;
And between the two pundrams
Should be worn by those who desire heaven.

Besides the wearers of this trident, there are other worshippers of Vishnu who wear a different mark. They are called *Madhvās,* and they hold the Dvaita doctrine (the dual order of things) ; indeed they are the true Dvaitas, and they take their origin from the sage Madhvāchārya who taught in the 13th century. These worship Vishnu, but they also hold Siva in honour. Their forehead mark is a straight black line drawn from the nose to the roots of the hair, and passing through a red round mark made with a mixture of turmeric and lime. The black line is made with charcoal, which, to be pure, should be taken from the fire before the god Vishnu. This black line is called *Angāram,* from the charcoal with which it is made. In some parts there are those who also put on the two upright white facial marks with Gōpīchandanam, only somewhat narrow ; others again are said to make these lines in red. Usually however the forehead is only adorned with the upright black line and red spot.

The Madhvās also impress on the various parts of the body, and on the forehead and temples, symbols of Vishnu, made with copper stamps, dipped in moistened Gōpīchandanam, to more clearly represent what the ordinary marks are supposed to signify. These are of five kinds, the conch (*sankha*), the wheel

(*chakra*), the club (*gada*), and the sword (*khadgam*), which are the things in the four hands of Vishṇu, and the lotus (*padma*).

The Madhvās, in putting on their marks, are supposed to repeat the mantrams as above, except that for the fourth they substitute the following :—

ब्रह्मघ्नो वाथ गोघ्नो वा
घातुकस्सर्वपापकृत् ।
गोपीचंदनसंपर्कात्
मुक्तो भवति तत्क्षणात् ॥

Be he a murderer of a brahmin, or of a cow,
A cruel tyrant, guilty of all manner of sins,
By contact with this gopichandanam
He immediately becomes an heir of heaven.

The Siva mark is three horizontal lines made with *vibhūti*, or ashes of burnt cow dung. This, to be of the purest kind, should be obtained from the fire of a sacrificing Brahmin. These ashes are made up into balls or tablets and sold in the bazaar, but if from poverty or from any other cause these cannot be procured, a little ash will be taken from the ordinary household fire-place and used for the purpose. It must be borne in mind that the ordinary fuel is dried cowdung. All the worshippers of Siva wear these three horizontal marks on various parts of the body, as the Vaishnavas do theirs, except that the shape is different. They are always in horizontal lines and there are no coloured marks except on the forehead. It should be noted also that all the worshippers of Siva are *Advaitas* as regards doctrine. The marks are made thus; a little of the ashes is rubbed in the left hand with some water, and the mixture is applied with three fingers of the right hand. Those on the various parts of the body are, perhaps, done somewhat carelessly; but the marks on the forehead are drawn with more care. The Saivas are divided into two main divisions, the *Smārthas*, those who also honour Vishnu, and *Lingadhāris*, or wearers of the

Lingum, who adhere solely to the worship of Siva. The latter of these may be distinguished by having the vibhūti marks drawn across the eyes and by the side of the ears. A round spot is made in the centre of the forehead which is usually red, and which is called *Akshatam.* Theoretically this spot should be a few grains of rice stuck on with sandalwood paste. A division of the Lingadhāris, however, who are Sudras, and who are called *Jangams*, always have this mark white, made with the vibhūti. Sometimes, however, they make it with sandalwood paste; but this is against rule, and is not done by the very strict. Speaking of sandalwood, it may be well to mention here that all Hindus, both the worshippers of Vishnu and those who adore Siva, use sandalwood paste for the sake of its sweet smell. It is not perhaps a necessity; but practically it is used by all. It is put on after all the daily ceremony is over, just before sitting down to food.

In putting on the marks, the Smartha Saiva should say the three first mantrams above quoted; this is because he holds Vishnu in honour. He also should say this fourth mantram. The Lingadhāri, however, who holds no allegiance to Vishnu at all, simply repeats this one alone :—

त्रियंबकं यजामहे
सुगंधिं पुष्टवर्धनं ।
उर्वारुकमिव बंधनात्
मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥

We worship that (the vibhūti) which appertains to the three eyed one (Siva);
It is fragrant and increases physical strength.
As a cucumber is separated from its stalk (when ripe)
May this separate (or deliver) me from ever present death.

There are perhaps seen at times, some varieties of these marks. For instance, some of the modern Saivas wear, in public, only one horizontal mark of

sandalwood paste—drawn through the centre spot across the forehead. This is sometimes made with the help of the yajnōpavītam (*sacred cord*), but even this is supposed to be three, and at any rate, the three lines made with vibhūti ought to be worn when taking meals. Those Saivas who worship Párvati, the wife of Siva, wear a small mark of vermilion under the central spot between the eyebrows.

All the marks are supposed to be put on at least twice a day; in the morning on rising, and at midday after bathing before food. Many in these modern days do not, however, put on the marks in the early morning; it is only the real orthodox Hindu who does this. Before taking food, however, it is imperative, and no one omits it then, even the most careless and irreligious. No ceremony and no act of worship can be performed without these marks. The rules and custom are most rigid on this point, and all must and do submit, willingly or unwillingly. In every Hindu house there is a receptacle of some kind, a basket or box, in which are kept the ingredients for putting on the marks, with any stamps or instruments that may be used, and perhaps a little bit of looking glass to assist in the operation. This receptacle is usually for the general use of the household, and perhaps a guest or visitor who may be staying in the house will have access to the same if he should not have brought his own "dressing case" with him. It must be borne in mind that, as with Europeans, it is necessary for a guest to comply with the usages of society as regards various details of dress and manners, so it is incumbent on the Hindu guest to conform to the habits of his fellows in the matter of general get up. Indeed it is not only a matter of conforming to the laws of good breeding, it is a vital matter of religion, and a Hindu dare not, absolutely dare not, at the peril of his soul, sit down to food without having first adorned himself with the marks of his religion. If it were possible for any ill advised person so to forget himself, a thing difficult even to imagine, he would have to dine alone, for no one would dare to consort with so bold an Iconoclast.

As a mark of mourning for the death of any relations, the red or yellow line in the centre of the Vishnu mark, (*srîchûrnam*), and the red spot in the centre of the forehead of the Smârtha Saivas (*akshata*) is changed to white for ten or more days. The Mâdhvas simply omit the red spot, wearing only the black streak. The Smârtha Saivas and Mâdhvas also follow this custom on fast days.

It may be asked what are the marks worn by women? No woman, who has a husband, has need of sacred marks, as she has no ceremonies to perform requiring them. Her husband does all her religious ceremonies for her, and he is her god. The wife does, however, perhaps for ornament, wear a mark in the centre of the forehead. It is usually made with vermilion, but sometimes it is black. It varies sometimes a little in shape, being either somewhat horizontal or perpendicular according as her husband is a Saiva or a Vaishnava, but it is generally merely a round spot. This spot is omitted altogether during mourning, and also during a certain period. Widows, however, have to perform certain ceremonies for themselves, and they wear the same marks as their husbands wore; only they must be those that exhibit mourning, that is to say without the coloured marks. The Vaishnava widows do not wear the full white mark on the face, only a line between the eyes and part way down the nose. Some Vaishnava widows, in the present day, do wear the Srîchûrnam or coloured central line, only in that case they do not put on the side white lines. Probably, however, those who do thus are comparatively few in number. Married women are in the habit of rubbing their faces and feet with water in which saffron has been mixed. This is perhaps only done for beauty's sake, to appear fair! At any rate a widow, to whom all enjoyable and pleasant things are denied, must not thus adorn herself.

In going over these various details one cannot but be reminded of the Christian mark, the mark of the cross made upon the forehead at baptism, or of that seal mentioned in the book of the Revelation where the angel "Sealed the servants of our God in the

forehead" (vii. 3). And the servant of Christ, the true Incarnation of the Living God, cannot but rejoice that, though but slowly still none the less surely, the Trident is giving way to the Cross, the marks of Vishnu and Siva to the marks of the Lord Jesus:—

> "Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 4, 5.)

# CHAPTER VII.

## THE HINDU TONSURE.

## शिखा. (Sikha).

By the command of the Véda, the ceremony of tonsure should be legally performed by the three first classes in the first or third year after birth. (Manu II. 35.)

Perhaps nothing impresses a stranger in India so much as the peculiar manner in which the Hindu treats his hair. He sees some with a clean shaven head, except a top knot of greater or less size and length whilst others have portions only of the scalp shaven, leaving most fantastic locks of varying size and shape. On the other hand some few are to be seen with the head covered with long, thick, tangled hair that seems as though it had not been interfered with, in any way, either from the tonsorial, or the toilet point of view, since the hour of birth. The absence of any head covering in so large a number of cases of those to be met with in the streets and thoroughfares, gives ample opportunity to observe the peculiar modes of dealing with the hair to which allusion is here made.

It is by no means easy, for the uninitiated, to arrive at the true reason for this varying coiffure; and personal enquiry of a chance acquaintance, would, probably, result in but little true information. If the ordinary Hindu were accosted and questioned on his own tonsorial peculiarity, he would probably have no reason whatever to give for it, except the universal answer to such questions, of its being the custom of his caste. Indeed very few of the Hindus know the reason why of any of the habits and customs that strike a foreigner as so peculiar; and they would perhaps treat as ridiculous any catechising on such matters—the custom exists and therefore it is followed,

that is quite enough for them; and if they are satisfied why should others trouble about it.

It is intended in this chapter to give some account of the Hindu manner of wearing the hair, and of the reasons why for the same. It must be premised, however, that nothing is here intended by way of an elaborate or learned disquisition. In this, as in other chapters, our chief efforts will be directed to giving a more or less popular account of things that lie on the surface of Hindu life, and concerning which so little is really know, even amongst the natives themselves in general, not to mention ordinary Anglo-Indians in particular.

Under the title of "The Hindu Tonsure" it will be necessary to allude somewhat to the moustaches and other hair of the sacred person of the twice born; for the hair, as almost everything else, enters into the complex religious ritual of the Brahminical religion; indeed, as will be seen further on, the hair is thought to be a symbol of sin, and the cutting it off a symbolical way of casting off sin; still, as the sacred top-knot is of prime importance, that will be the chief subject upon which we shall enlarge. The Sanskrit name of this top-knot is *sikha,* and by that name it is known amongst the upper classes of all Hindus whatever their vernacular. In Tamil it is called *cudimi,* in Telugu *zuttu.*

It is curious circumstance, and one suggestive of further study, that whilst the tonsure of the Roman Catholic Priest—the first ceremony in dedicating a person to the priesthood—consists of shaving a circle on the crown of the head, the Hindu tonsure—one of the chief ceremonies in the Upanayanam, or investiture with sacred powers—consists of removing all the hair except a circular portion situated on the same part of the head.

Although the *sikha* is so important that without it a Brahmin is not a Brahmin,—the tonsure and the investiture with the Yagnōpavītam being the chief elements in the Upanayanam or spiritual birth of the twice born,—there seems to be but very slight foundation for so complicated a superstructure. Learned

Sháśtris seem to be unable to give anything on the point from the Védas except the mantram that will be quoted by and bye, and the allusions to the same in Manava Dharma Sāstra. The ceremonies, as is the case with so many others, appear to have gradually grown with the growth of the rest of the Hindu rituals. The first notice of it that appears in the Laws of Manu is where, probably in allusion to the Vēdic mantram, the thing itself is taken for granted in the following notice :—

> "By oblations to fire during the mother's pregnancy, by holy rites on the birth of the child, by the tonsure of his head with a lock of hair left on it, by the ligation of the sacrificial cord are the birth taints of the three classes wholly removed." (II. 27.)

Hair ceremonies may be said to commence before the birth of a child at all, as, for some six months before that event, the father abstains altogether from shaving until the eleventh day of the child's birth. Doubtless this ceremony is set aside in many instances in the present day of compromises, especially in the case of Government and other officials who would not think it respectful to appear before their superiors with a beard of such a growth. By orthodox Hindus, however, and especially those in rural parts who have not yet learned to accommodate themselves to circumstances, this custom is still strictly followed.

In the laws of Manu it is thus written :—

> "By the command of the Vēda, the ceremony of tonsure should be legally performed by the three first classes in the first or third year after the birth." (II. 35).

This command is still strictly carried into effect; but it is now usually done at about the third year instead of the first. There are instances where the hair of a boy may not be cut at all until the Upanayanam ceremony. This would be in the event of either of the parents making a vow to that effect. Suppose the infant were taken ill, or any like misfortune were to happen to him, a vow might be made to a certain god, that the first hair-cutting of

the child should take place at the shrine of the god invoked. For instance, at Tirupati in North Arcot, the chief shrine of the god Venkatēshvara (a local name under which Vishnu is worshipped).

The ceremony of first performance of the tonsure (*chaulam*) is somewhat as follows. Hitherto the boy's hair has been allowed to grow like that of a girl, and the fond mother has been wont to cherish it, and ornament it, in the same way, with plaitings and jewels; but now the heretofore uncut locks must be sacrificed to the inexhorable laws of the Hindu religion. On a propitious day, previously fixed upon by the Purōhita, musicians are called, and a feast is prepared for friends and relatives; it is not, however, considered so important an occasion as to call for very great expense or trouble. The first three cuts with the scissors must be made by the mother's brother, or failing such a relative, by the next nearest of kin on the mother's side. After these first three cuts have been made, the boy is handed over to the family barber, who clips off all the hair except a small spot on the top of the head. Some time after this clipping, perhaps a month after, the head is shaved for the first time, and doubtless many a gash has been inflicted, and many a tear shed on such occasions. It must be borne in mind that the Hindu barber does not make a nice lather with soap or any like substance; water, pure and simple, is rubbed over the parts to be operated upon, and then all is left to the cutting powers of the clumsy-looking razor. When the head is thus shaved, various fashions are adopted, according to varying ideas of beauty! Sometimes separate locks are left over the temples and at the back of the ears; these are called *kakapaksham* or crow's wings. Sometimes, again, the hair is allowed to grow all round the head, whilst the whole of the top is clean shaven. These varying forms of beauty may be seen any day, as one passes our juvenile Aryan brethren, with their little heads bared to the scorching sun. The head is shaven, as a rule, about once a month.

One interesting fact, already alluded to as connected with this first cutting of the hair, may here be

more fully explained. If for any cause whatever, the boy's mother has made a vow to a certain god, as above explained, it is the rule for this cutting of the congenital hair to be made at the shrine of the god invoked. A pilgrimage is arranged to the place, and there the ceremony is performed. Sometimes, however, it may not, for financial or other reasons, be convenient for such a pilgrimage, at the time when it is imperative to perform the ceremony. In such a case the shaving takes place at home; but a small tuft is left near the sikha, to be removed at the shrine when opportunity for a pilgrimage occurs. Sometimes the hair that has been clipped off is preserved, and tied up in a cloth to the rafters of the house until a pilgrimage can be arranged. This is the only occasion upon which the hair is allowed to remain in the house; cut hair is always considered as impure. When opportunity offers the hair is then taken to the shrine, and thrown into the sacred tank of the temple, or delivered to the officiating priest for disposal. The god Venkateshvara at Tirupati is a favourite one in South India for such vows. This god also has a shrine at Dvāraka Tirumala, near Ellore in the Godavery District, which is perhaps for all practical purposes held as holy as Tirupati.

The real sacred tonsure is however not performed until what may be called the religious coming of age. This varies according to caste. The following is the law laid down on the subject:—

> "In the eighth year from the conception of a Brahmin, in the eleventh from that of a Kshatriya, and in the twelfth from that of a Vaisya, let the father invest the child with the marks of his class." (Manu II. 36.).

These marks of the class consist of the Yagnōpavītam, the mark on the forehead, and the Sikha or sacred top-knot. At this important ceremony the head is shaven in the presence of the family, whilst the family priest chants mantrams, and musicians play on their instruments without. The top-knot, and four small spots surrounding it, are left unshaven;

the five places being called *pancha sikha.* It is said the top-knot itself must be the size of the foot-print of a cow (*gōpādam*); but, as there are cows and cows, this is rather an uncertain measurement. It may be that this is the reason why one sees such various sizes in the Sikhas; some being comparatively very small, whilst others are sufficiently large to cover a great part of the head, and, when untied, to flow down in a sweeping tail to below the waist.

This may be a suitable place to mention, for the information of those not acquainted with India, that the top-knot is usually twisted up and tied in a knot or coil, and is carefully stowed away under the turban, or cap when the head is covered. It is amusing to see the dexterity with which a Hindu will twist up his hair and knot it up, when it may have become disarranged; and one may sometimes see an old gentleman carefully stroking out the few grey hairs age has left him in his beloved sikha, and watch him tie it into a tiny knot close up to his bald scalp.

The whole of this shaving ceremony is so interesting that it may be well to give it somewhat in detail. Each family priest has a kind of rubric telling him exactly what to do on such occasions. These rubrics were originally drawn up by Rishis or Sages, and their directions are strictly carried out. The shaving rite is administered just before the young man is invested with the sacred thread. The priest acts for the father who may be ignorant of the mantrams and ritual. The theory seems to be that the father administers these rites in the god's stead, and the priest acts for the father. The priest goes through the ceremony, the father following him, where he is able to repeat the words at all. As a kind of introductory sentence to the shaving rite the following sentence is repeated:—

येनावपदिति चत सृभिः ।
प्रतिमंत्रं प्रतिदिशं ।
प्रदक्षिणं प्रवपति ॥

The meaning of this is very difficult to make out, but it may be taken to mean some thing as follows:—

He (Jagatjanakaha—the progenitor of the world) shaves, repeating the four mantrams commencing with the one that begins with the words yēnā vapat—uttering one at each of the four cardinal points, and making circumambulation (*pradakshinam*).

The priest then instructs the father of the youth who is being invested, to take stalks of the sacred grass (*darbha*) and put one on each of the four sides of the youth's head, indicating the four cardinal points of the compass, and cut each stalk with a razor, thus showing the barber where to leave the four patches in shaving the head. The priest also directs the youth to turn to the four cardinal points, commencing from the east, and at each he repeats the following mantram :—

येनावपत्सविता क्षुरेण सोमस्य राज्ञो वरुणस्य विद्वान् ।
तेन ब्रह्माणोवपतेदमस्यायुष्मान् जरदष्टिर्यथासत् ॥

The all wise progenitor of all things, with what razor he shaved the Moon and Varuna with the same he shaved Brahma. He also shaves the head of this youth. May he have long life and may his ignorance perish.

The whole of this ritual seems to be elaborated from this mantram. It is explained that Jagatjanakaha—the progenitor of the world—aforetime shaved the heads of his sons, the Moon, Varuna, and Brahma, that their lives might be prolonged, and that fame and prosperity might attend their career. This mantram is said to include the very words the god used when he performed the operation, and the priest simply repeats them word for word.

A short time after the Upanayanam, another ceremony is performed with reference to the hair; this time in a temple; the former one being in the house. At this second ceremony, the four spots that had

been left unshorn around the *sikha* are shaven clean off, and no hair is left on the head but the top-knot itself. The Sikha is held to be very sacred and it must never be removed for any cause whatever; without it the man is no true Hindu, nor can he perform any religious ceremonies whatever. I have enquired of learned Pandits as to what would happen if, through baldness, or by the effects of any disease or accident, a man were to lose his Sikha, and it appears that in such a case, the absence of the hair would not necessarily disqualify him from performing the sacred offices. This, perhaps, is an interesting point, as it seems to be one of the very few bits of elasticity found in the rigid Brahminical law.

A custom has grown up that appears to be generally followed, though it is said to be against the strict letter of the law, for boys to allow the side patches, (Kākapaksham), to grow again after they have been shaved off as above. This is done to follow out the native idea of beauty! These beauty patches, however, can only be worn during the life time of the boy's parents; upon the death of either parent he must remove all except the Sikha. If a young man is so fortunate as to have his parents living until he himself advances in age, say something between twenty and thirty, and arrives at a period when he adopts for himself strict religious observances, he removes all these side-locks. He then, for his own soul's benefit, adopts religious observances, such as prayers and sacrifices to fire and the sun *(hōmam and sūryanamaskāram)*, for performing which he must be clean shaven except the Sikha.

There is a passage in Manu which seems to allude to a custom that appears now to have become extinct. I can find no trace of the ceremony here alluded to, though it may possibly be in vogue in some other parts of India. The passage in question is as follows :—

"The ceremony of Cēsānta, or cutting off the hair, is ordained for the priest in the sixteenth year from conception; for the soldier, in the twenty-second; for a merchant, two years later than that." (II. 65.)

The Hindu, in South India at least, does not wear a beard at all, though from pictures one sometimes sees of Brahmins in the North, it appears as if it is worn by some up in those parts. Customs may differ in such widely distant places in this as in other respects. It appears also that the Kulin, and some other Brahmins of the north, do not even wear the Sikha; but crop their hair something after the European fashion, but these must, by this fact alone, be disqualified from performing sacrificial and other rites and ceremonies.

When it is said that the Hindu does not wear a beard, we must except the Yōgis or hermits who do not shave at all, either the head or the face. In the chapter on Devotion, Manu lays down the law as follows on this point :—

> "When the father of a family perceives his muscles become flaccid and his hair grey, and sees the child of his child, let him then seek refuge in a forest.
>
> "Let him wear a black antelope's hide, or a vesture of bark; let him bathe evening and morning; let him suffer the hairs of his beard, and his nails to grow continually." (VI. 2, 6.)

When a Hindu, however, becomes a Sanyāsi, that is, enters the fourth, and last stage of the Hindu spiritual life, he, being supposed to have done with all sublunary affairs, even religious rites and ceremonies, cuts off his sikha and indeed all hair from his face and head, and henceforth goes quite bare.

> Having thus performed religious acts in a forest during the third portion of his life, let him become a Sanyāsi for the fourth portion of it, abandoning all sensual affections, *and wholly reposing in the Supreme Spirit.*
>
> His hair, nails, and beard being clipped, bearing with him a dish, a staff, and a water pot, his whole mind being fixed on god, let him wander about continually, without giving pain to animal or vegetable beings. (Manu VI. 33, 52.)

The moustache is, as a rule, worn by Hindus of every caste and nation except the priestly classes.

The priest, of whatever caste he may be, even the Dāsari or pariah priest, must have his face clean shaven (see chapter on Mendicity). In the chapter on the sacred marks, mention was made of the three great schools of philosophy into which Hindus are divided. There are those who belong to the Visishtādvaita school and who, as followers of Rāmānuja, are strict worshippers of Vishnu only. This sect never wear the moustache, but are always clean shaven. It may also be mentioned in passing, that they also abstain from smoking, although they may console themselves with snuff! The *Smarthas* who hold the Advaita doctrine, and who worship Siva in particular but reverence Vishnu, and the *Madhvas* who follow the Dvaita system, and who worship Vishnu in particular, but reverence Siva are both divided into two divisions of secular and priestly brahmins. The Smārthas are *Niyōgis* and *Vaidīkis;* and the Madhvas are *Vyāpāris* and *Āchāryas.* The Vaidīkis and the Āchāryas are the priestly classes, and as such they should always have a face quite clean shaven. They also, as with the Rāmānujas, should abstain from smoking. In these latter days, however, the Vaidikis are far from strict in these matters; and many of them wear the facial hirsute ornament, as do their secular brethren. They also, in very many cases, have abandoned the priestly office, and follow the profession of the bar, or go into any of the various branches of the public service; they may also be found in numbers following educational and other like pursuits; for all of these occupations their hereditary connection with vedic learning and general culture seems to particularly fit them. Therefore if a Hindu is seen to have a clean shaven face, it may, as a rule, be set down that he is either a priest or a member of one of the priestly classes.

There is, we should observe, an exception to this, which may be mentioned here. Amongst Europeans the sign of mourning for deceased relatives is to wear black clothing; but amongst the Hindus, besides the absence of colour in the face mark, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, the sign of

mourning is to shave off the moustache. A new comer to the country may, some fine morning, be surprised to see his Hindu munshi, or clerk, or servant come before him with a clean shaven face, and the change this makes in the appearance of the hitherto moustached individual, is so great as to cause him for the moment to be taken for a stranger. Enquiry will discover that the poor man has lost his father, or mother, or son, or brother, or some other relative for whom it falls to his lot to perform the funeral ceremonies; upon such an occasion it is imperative that a clean shave be made.

Another custom that is worthy of notice is the feast *pushkaram* or twelfth year festival. Certain holy rivers have a festival every twelve years. At these festivals those Hindus who have lost their father make a pilgrimage to the particular river, in order to perform ceremonies for their deceased ancestors. There are said to be twelve rivers in India that are thus honoured. The Narbada holds its festival in the current year of 1895. Next year it will be the Godaveri; and in the following year, the Krishna. At a time of the year fixed upon by the astrologers, the particular river will have its festival, and crowds of pilgrims will resort to the various holy localities of the river indicated. The number of pilgrims, of course, depending upon the distance to be travelled to reach the particular river, and the piety or ability of the people. The initial act in this ceremony is to have the head and face quite clean shaven, except the Sikha; and it is this fact that brings the matter within the scope of this chapter. On the occurrence of this festival anywhere within a reasonable distance of one's own neighbourhood, it is curious to see so many men with clean shaven faces. It is difficult to recognize one's acquaintances, the change made in the appearance is so great. Besides the sons of deceased fathers, widows also go to these Pushkaram festivals. Indeed it is highly incumbent upon a widow to attend, and to undergo the ordeal of shaving, and bathing for the benefit of the soul of her departed husband. The pilgrim is shaved, and then proceeds to

bathe in the holy water; the merit acquired being for the souls of the departed forefathers, or husband as the case may be. At the time of shaving, the attendant priest repeats the following words of purification; the pilgrim repeating after him if able to do so:—

मेरुमंदरतुल्यानि ।
पापानि विविधानिच ।
केशानश्रित्य तिष्टंति ।
तस्मात् केशान् वपाम्यहं ॥

Sins as huge as mounts Meru or Mandara,
Sins of various kinds,
These sins adhere to the hair of the head,
For these sins I undorgo this shaving.

Sacred bathing in holy rivers, accompanied by religious shaving, as above, is also sometimes resorted to by a conscience stricken sinner who seeks by *prāyaschittam,* or expiatory rites, to be freed from the burden or penalty of his offences. Suppose any one has been unfortunate enough to kill a cow, even accidentally, or has upon his conscience some equally heavy burden, he may seek the advice of his spiritual director who may recommend a pilgrimage to some holy river. The distance may be very long, and the consequent trouble and inconvenience very great, still, under such circumstances, the penitent would probably attempt the task. On arriving at the place indicated, he would seek the services of the local barber, and, after submitting himself to his tender mercies, plunge into the cleansing stream to come forth, as he hopes, and believes, with all his guilt cleansed away. At this religious shaving, the above quoted incantation must be repeated as in the case of the Puskharam pilgrim. We may here note in passing the analogy there is between these purificatory rites of shaving and bathing, and those prescribed in the Old Testament for the purifying of the leper and also

in the case of the purifying of the Levites. (Vide Lev. xiv. 9 ; Num. viii. 7.)

We must also not omit to mention the vows that are sometimes made by men, and women too, that necessitate the loss of the hair. As a rule, a woman never parts with her hair; for a woman to be shorn is a sign of widowhood, amongst the Hindus. There are times when an exceedingly religious or loving woman may, in order to bring blessings upon her husband, part with a little of her cherished hair ; but this would be an extreme mark of being a loving and virtuous wife. When this is done it should be at the confluence of certain rivers ; and there, with appropriate rites and ceremony, the wife may submit to her husband cutting off a short length from her long hair, the severed portion being then offered to the river deity. At times of sickness, however, both men and women may make a vow to a certain god that, in the event of recovery, they will make a pilgrimage to its shrine and offer up their hair. When such a vow is upon a man, he will not shave at all, but allow all his hair to grow until he may be able to make the pilgrimage, and carry into effect his vow. In fulfilment of such a vow the man, or woman, as the case may be, will go to the shrine of the god invoked and, there, with certain ceremony, will be clean shaven. Even the woman will have her head clean shaven and the man also his Sikha taken off, the hair being offered to the god. The favourite place for such pilgrimages from this neighbourhood, is Tirupati and there the shorn hair is thrown into the large tank connected with the temple.

The rules connected with the act of shaving are also strict and somewhat complicated. First of all it is not right that any one should shave himself. The law is thus laid down by Manu in the chapter on Economics and private morals :—

> The sun in the sign of Canyā, the smoke of a burning corpse, and a broken seat, must be shunned ; he must never cut his own hair and nails, nor ever tear his nails with his teeth. (IV. 69.)

It is easy to see how this restriction arose. Young boys cannot shave themselves, and even if they could, it would be a very clever boy indeed that could shave his own head, especially the back part of it. Here Hinduism steps in and stereotypes a custom, making it a religious observance. The shaving too as well as the pairing of the nails should not be carried on in a room of a dwelling house, as hair and nail pairings both are considered to cause pollution. These operations are always carried on in some open place, as a verandah or shed, but more often in the open street. It is a very common sight to see the barber and his victim seated under a tree, or on the shady side of a wall, or house, whilst the tonsorial performance is being carried on. This is not done, oftener, perhaps, than once or twice a month in the case of the commoner people; whilst once a week is perhaps the rule amongst the better off classes. In the towns, however, amongst the higher ranks of society, the face is shaved even oftener than this, as distinct, perhaps, from the shaving of the head. In the Hindu village divisions there is a regular grant of land (*Ĭnām*) for the village barber; and any infringement of this grant leads to law-suits by the injured party. Curious to say there have been suits instituted by village barbers to restrain the inhabitants of his village from being shaved by any other than himself. This, as a Hindu friend observed, is bordering very closely on slavery; but such is custom and such are the hard and fast lines drawn by Hinduism. As to the time of shaving, a man cannot have this operation performed every day even if he were so inclined, as there are certain holy days and unlucky days upon which such a thing should not take place. For instance, on the day of the new moon (*Amāvāsya*) and on the eleventh day from that; and on the day of full moon (*Pournami*) and on the eleventh day from that, these being holy days, also on Tuesdays and Saturdays, these being unlucky days, shaving cannot be done. The operation also must be undergone fasting and hence it is generally done in the morning.

There are many other little things connected with

the hair that need not be mentioned here; enough has been said to give some insight into the peculiarities of the Hindu Tonsure. One cannot however avoid the reflection how much the Hindu is tied and bound with the fetters of custom and religious observances, and utterance must be given to the hope that the day is drawing near when the people will be delivered from all this bondage into the glorious liberty of the faith of Christ Jesus.

The vexed question as to the retaining of the Sikha by Christian converts has been carefully avoided, as these pages are scarcely the place to enter into a discussion that has occupied the attention of two well known Indian Bishops and found them ranged upon different sides. Suffice it to say that whilst some hold it is merely a national custom that is no more connected with religion than everything else Hindu, and hence its retention or not is merely a matter of taste, others maintain that it is so intimately connected with pagan rites and ceremonies as to be distinctly heathen and demand its complete removal. Others there are again who take a more moderate view, and, whilst they deprecate its retention by Christians as being to some extent a badge of Hinduism, they would not imperatively demand its removal, trusting that as Christianity spreads, this, together with many other objectionable customs, will gradually die out.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## HINDU MARRIAGES.

### विवाह. (Vivāha.)

The nuptial ceremony is considered as the complete institution of women, ordained for them in the Veda, together with reverence to their husbands. (Manu II. 67).

In giving a description of Hindu marriages, it is not intended to do more than merely allude, by way of introduction, to the institution itself, as such; nor to give a disquisition on the custom of infant marriages and the consequent evil of early widowhood, with all its attendant miseries. That were somewhat beside the object in view in this chapter, which is rather to furnish some information as to the various customs and ceremonies connected with the marriage rite itself. This is, perhaps, a more homely subject and one that does not call for such profound treatment; nevertheless it may present a somewhat interesting insight into ordinary Hindu life and ways.

All Hindu laws and regulations on the marriage question take it for granted that all men and women must marry. It is only those who may be suffering from disqualifications of mind, or body that do not marry. There are no "old bachelors" or "old maids" amongst the Hindus. The regulations and directions are all confined to the matter of how to choose, and how and when the marriage is to be performed.

It appears quite clear that in Vēdic time there was some liberty of choice amongst both men and women, as to their partners; for it is thus written :—

Three years let a damsel wait, though she be marriageable; but, after that term, let her choose for herself a bridegroom of equal rank :

> If, not being given in marriage, she choose her bridegroom, neither she, nor the youth chosen commit any offence.
>
> But a damsel, thus electing her husband, shall not carry with her the ornaments which she received from her father, nor those given by her mother or brethren : if she carry them away, she commits theft. (Manu IX. 90-92.)

But whatever liberty may have existed in this respect in ancient times, it is very certain that such is not the case now. The institution of child marriage has entirely destroyed that liberty. Of course there is much to say on both sides of the question as to liberty of choice in this matter, and opinions widely differ, even amongst Europeans; for, whilst amongst English speaking nations, very great liberty is given and, except in certain cases, and under certain conditions, the matter is left pretty much to the young people themselves, with most other European nations it is very different, and, to a large extent, the choice and arrangements are settled by the parents of the parties.

Amongst Brahmins, and Vaisyas (the Merchant caste) whilst a boy cannot be married until he has been invested with the marks of the twice born (*upanayanam*), though they are often married immediately after that event, it is imperative for girls to be married before puberty, and usually it is done whilst they are quite young. Other castes and non-castes may marry later on in life, still, even amongst them, the vows of matrimony are taken at a very early age when compared with the European custom. This necessity for marriage is often a great burden, as the choice is, more or less, limited. Marriages can only take place between those of the same caste, and the same sect, whilst there are also prohibitive degrees of tribe and family, within which marriages are not allowed. Amongst the larger sects this does not act so much as an obstacle, but amongst the smaller ones it often causes great difficulty. There are also natural likes and dislikes, some of which are thus alluded to by the great law-giver Manu, and which evidently point to a period when marriages were settled at a more

natural age, and, in what we consider, a more natural manner :—

"Let him not marry a girl with reddish hair, nor with any deformed limb; nor one troubled with habitual sickness; nor one either with no hair or with too much; nor one immoderately talkative; nor one with inflamed eyes."

Let him choose for his wife a girl whose form has no defect; who has an agreeable name; who walks gracefully like a phenicopteros, or like a young elephant; whose hair and teeth are moderate respectively in quality and in size; whose body has exquisite softness. (Manu III. 8, 80).

It may be well here to allude to the two institutions of Polyandry and Polygamy, as they do both exist in India. The former, however, cannot be said to be a Hindu institution; indeed it is utterly opposed and abhorrent to the very spirit of Hinduism. It is practised by such non-Hindus, or unorthodox Hindus, as the Tōdas of the Neilgherries, and the Nairs of the Western Coast, but it is only a local, and in no sense a universal custom. Polygamy, however, is a true Hindu institution, and it is duly legislated upon in the various codes. Manu lays down the law as follows :—

For the first marriage of the twice born classes, a woman of the same class is recommended; but for such as are impelled by inclination to marry again, women in the direct order of the classes are to be preferred.

A Sudra woman only must be the wife of a Sudra; she and a Vaisyā of a Vaisya; they two and a Cshatriyā of a Cshatriya; those two and a Brahmanī of a Brahman. (III. 13, 14.)

This however only alludes to a state of things in those early Vedic days; in this Kali Yuga or degenerate age, though a man may have, and in some cases should have, more wives than one at the same time, it can only be within strictly recognised caste limits. One of the stories in the *Vickramārkacharitra* turns upon the fact of a Brahmin being allowed to take to wife a woman from each of the *four* castes; although,

as it will be observed, the law-giver in the above quoted texts, only allows the Brahmin three wives; that is, one each from the two next castes besides one from his own. Now, however none, and especially a Brahmin, dare to marry outside of his own caste; but, within these limits, there are circumstances under which it is rather incumbent upon him than otherwise, for a Hindu to take a second wife. Should his wife prove barren, or should all the male issue that might be given die, then, very often, the husband will be pressed by the wife herself to re-marry, so that there may be surviving male issue, and thus the reproach of the family wiped away, and the future salvation of those concerned fully assured. This concession is, however, guarded round with conditions, some of which are thus stated by Manu :—

> A barren wife may be superseded by another in the eighth year; she whose children are all dead in the tenth; she who brings forth only daughters in the eleventh; she who speaks unkindly, without delay. (IX. 81.)

Another condition that is not perhaps an absolutely binding one in all cases, is that the first wife should consent to the re-marriage. It is not difficult to understand how reluctant a woman would naturally be thus to have a sharer in her husband's affection; and perhaps it is impossible for Europeans to understand her ever consenting to, much less wishing for, such a state of things. The desire, however, for male issue, indeed the absolute necessity for a son, either born or adopted, is so overpowering, that it is not so unusual a thing as might at first be supposed, for a woman, at all and any risk to her own personal happiness or position in the family, even to strongly desire her husband to seek out another suitable spouse and bring her to his home. Still notwithstanding all this, it is comparatively an unusual thing for a Hindu to have more wives than one; and this may perhaps be especially said of the higher castes. Amongst the non-caste people we do now and then meet with cases where a man is living with more than

one wife; I am bound to say, however, that in one of such cases I have met with, the domestic peace and happiness were not all that could be desired. It may be that one important deterrent to polygamy is the very great expense connected with an orthodox Hindu marriage. The attendant cost is such that once in a life time is, very often, enough to hang a load of debt around the poor man's neck, for the greater part of his natural existence.

Amongst nearly all Hindus there is a peculiar idea in the matter of degrees of relationships within which marriage is desirable; and this, amongst the Vaisyas, has become an imperative necessity; whilst most other castes think it so desirable as to be worth great effort to carry it into effect. I allude to what is called, amongst the Telugu people, *Mēnarikam*, by which a youth should marry his mother's brother's daughter, and a girl should marry her father's sister's son. Failing such relationships, the choice is left free; that is, of course, free within the proper limits of caste and sect. Much trouble is sometimes caused even in the Christian Church, by the hold this idea has upon the minds of the people; seeing that sometimes one of the parties thus eligible may be a Christian, and the other outside the pale of the church. There are, however, some sects of Brahmins who are opposed to this Mēnarikam rule, thinking the blood-relationship too close for marriage.

There is another bar to marriages amongst Hindus that does not exist amongst Europeans, and that is, that a younger brother cannot marry until the elder one is married. Neither can a younger sister marry before the elder one is disposed of. This is not a mere custom, it is according to what is strictly laid down in the code.

"He who makes a marriage contract with the connubial fire, whilst his elder brother continues unmarried, is called a *parivētru;* and the elder brother a *parivitti.* The *Parivētru,* the *parivitti,* the damsel thus wedded, the giver of her in wedlock and fifthly, the performer of the nuptial sacrifice, all sink to a region of torment." (Manu III. 171, 172.)

It may be well to mention that in this sketch we have most in mind the Brahmins, who are, of course, more particular in ceremonies than other castes except, perhaps, the Vaisyas; but at the same time, though the inferior castes may leave out various items of the ritual, the mode of procedure may be said to be pretty much the same amongst all orthodox Hindus.

Many marriages are arranged, particularly between near relatives, when the boy and girl are mere infants, perhaps within a few months of birth; but when that is not done, the parents begin to look around for a suitable *parti* when the proper time for marriage is drawing near. In such a case, if the father of a marriageable boy hears or knows of a suitable match, he will select a fortunate day and then proceed to visit the parents of the girl with a view to preliminaries and to talk the matter over. He is always careful to take with him his son's horoscope, as the girl's friends will want to see whether the youth was born under such a combination of the planets as to augur well for the future of the proposed pair. The horoscope is a document drawn up by the family priest (*Purōhita*) at the birth of every boy, and sometimes of a girl, shewing the date and even the moment of the birth, and the state of the planetary system at the time. This document is always carefully preserved for future reference. If the horoscope is favourable, preliminaries are talked over and, perhaps, financial arrangements made. Sometimes, particularly if the expectant bridegroom should be unpromising or old and a comparative stranger, the friends of the girl, on his sending a go-between, may try to drive a bargain and squeeze money out of him. No well-to-do father would care to give his daughter to such a man with, perhaps, the certainty of her soon being a widow, but a poor man may be tempted to do it for the sake of gain, as will be seen further on. Sometimes, when a rich old man loses his wife, the parents of a young girl will take means of intimating to him their willingness to give him their daughter for a consideration. This however is considered very improper, and is indeed against the letter of the law.

"Let no father who knows the law, receive a gratuity, however small, for giving his daughter to marriage; since the man, who, through avarice, takes a gratuity for that purpose, is a seller of his offspring." (Manu III. 51.)

Notwithstanding, it is by no means unoommon for the bride's parents to demand a sum of money, sometimes comparatively very large, from the boy's friends before they will consent to a match. This is, of course, very like selling the girl, and is the very thing guarded against in the above quotation; but seeing that it is not a dowry given to be settled upon the bride, and that it is pocketed by her parents, it is difficult to regard it in any other light. The dowry given by the friends of the bridegroom to the bride, in the shape of jewels, and which goes with the bride when she goes to her new home, is besides and over and above the money in question. The name given to the arrangements for this money gift to the girl's parent, is one which means bargaining; and, when there are several applicants for her hand, it often becomes very much like an auction holding out for the highest bid. To quote a case that is said to have recently happened in this neighbourhood, and it is I am informed only one of many that are of more or less frequent occurrence in one part or another:—A certain poor Brahmin agreed to give his daughter, who was nine years of age, to the son of one of his own caste. The sum of money agreed upon in this case was Rs. 700 which was handed over to the girl's father, and the Prathānam, or betrothal ceremony, actually took place. Within a couple of months, a more wealthy suitor appeared on the scene, and offered Rs. 1,000, which sum was duly paid over, and a second Prathānam was performed. The matter came to the ears of the first party and he took legal steps to stay all proceedings, and obtained an "injunction" from the court, pending the hearing of a suit. The case duly came before the court, and it resulted in the girl's father having to refund the Rs. 700 to the first suitor for his daughter, besides paying the costs of the proceeding. After this the girl was finally married to the son of the one who gave the larger sum.

It was said above that young people have no voice whatever in their marriage arrangements, at least as far as the choice is concerned, but there do now and then happen solitary cases where a vigorous protest is effectual, if the party happens to be old enough and determined enough to make a stand. Quite recently, a very wealthy Brahmin widower of no less than eighty years of age, some six months after the death of his wife, made advances to the father of a certain girl who happened to have reached the age of twelve still unmarried. The aged suitor is said to have promised Rs. 1,000 down to the father, and also to give Rs. 20,000 worth of jewels to the girl, as her personal dowry; the girl it is true had the certain prospect before her of early widowhood but then she would have her share of the old man's wealth! The prospect pleased the maiden's father and he consented to the marriage. The girl, however, had to be reckoned with here, and she not only positively refused to be married to the old man, but firmly expressed her determination to drown herself if the matter were proceeded with. Her attitude had the desired effect and the proposed match was abandoned.

It should be mentioned that this unlawful custom of a father receiving money in return for giving his daughter appears to prevail mostly amongst Brahmins. Ordinarily, amongst Hindus, there is an interchange of gifts by way of dowry from the bride's father to the bridegroom, and from his father to the bride. These dowries usually take the shape of jewels, and clothes, and brass and copper household vessels, and the like. The nature and value of these mutual gifts is all settled at the interview between the parents, and friends before the Prathānam. Of course the value will depend on the wealth, and position, or other circumstances of the parties concerned. Jewels are also given to the bride by her father to be her sole property; and in some cases, if a young wife dies without issue, these jewels are returned to him. There appears to be no definite rule on this latter points; but it is a custom that is often complied with, and there is sometimes much bad feeling aroused

when it is not done. The law as to the separate property of a married woman is thus laid down by Manu :—

What was given before the nuptial fire, what was given on the bridal procession, what was given in token of love, and what was received from a brother, a mother, or a father, are considered as the six-fold separate property of a married woman.

What she received after marriage from the family of her husband, and what her affectionate lord may have given her shall be inherited, even if she die in his life time, by her children. (IX. 194, 195.)

It may perhaps serve a good purpose if we here insert a quotation, going to show how wide spread is this evil of selling girls as brides; and also the healthy feeling that is being aroused with reference to it. The Kistna District Association, which is the local expression of the Indian National Congress, and which is also in some way connected with that body, held its third Conference at Bezwada on the 7th June 1894 and following days. About a hundred visitors and two hundred delegates attended from different parts of the District. The President was the Hon. Mr. N. Subbarao Pantulu, B.A., B.L., Member of the Legislative Council of the Government of Madras; and the delegates included Lawyers, Landholders, Hon. Magistrates, Merchants, Members of Local Boards, Municipal Councillors and others all representing the light and learning of the District. On the third day of the Conference, the following resolution was proposed by Mr. R. Venkataratnam Naidu, M.A. and seconded by Mr. S. Hanumantarao B.A., B.L. and Mr. K. Venkatappaiah, B.A., B.L. and carried with acclamation. I quote from the printed report issued by the Association :—

XX. That this Conference instructs the Secretaries of the Kistna District Association to issue pamphlets pointing out the evils accruing from the sale of girls and excessive expenditure on marriage occasions.

The proposer of the resolution, in bringing forward the motion, spoke as follows :—

"Gentlemen! The monstrous custom of selling girls needs no words of mine to make you try to root it out from our Society. I will give you one particular case which will show you the advisability of taking proper steps to remove the evil. A certain gentleman, in a certain village, married his daughter, 10 years old, to an old man of 81 and received Rs. 2,000 for the bargain. In due course, the girl matured, and the nuptial ceremony was performed. The girl was sent to her hated husband, much against her will. She escaped from the room in the dead of night and threw herself into a well. When the old man awoke in the morning, he missed his young wife, and, on search being made, her dead body was found floating in a well. There are several instances of this sort. In some cases, if the ill assorted pair be seen together the bride will appear as a daughter, or even a grand-daughter. The young brides become widows even in a week after their marriages. These evils are too apparent to me and I think you will enthusiastically carry this resolution."

That such cases as these are not only possible, but of comparative frequent occurrence, is a fact that calls for serious attention on the part of those who wish well to this country, and it is a most hopeful sign when such a body as the one above alluded to begins to take serious notice of the matter. If there are such cases that, perhaps, from some untoward circumstance, come to the light, one cannot but reflect upon the great number there must be that are never heard of, and of the consequent unrecorded, and unknown misery endured by our Indian sisters, even in the present day.

A case happened several years ago which will serve further to illustrate the crooked ways that are sometimes resorted to, for the sake of gain, in the matter of marriages. This was told me by a friend, who happened at the time, to be the Joint-Magistrate of Ongole in the Nellore district and before whom the case was tried. A certain Brahmin brought a charge of defamation against some of his fellow-caste-men because they had excommunicated him, and had

widely published the fact throughout the country. The accused parties admitted the fact, but pleaded justification. The story told in court was as follows: This Brahmin had espied a certain Pariah girl, who could, he thought, be made useful to him; he concocted, therefore, and carried into effect the following plan. He purchased the girl from her father for a certain sum of money, and then took her across the border into the Nizam's country. There he dressed her up as a Brahmin girl, and taught her how to act the part of one. After this he took her to Hyderabad city, and palmed her off upon a wealthy Brahmin there, who married the girl, and paid a sum of money to the crafty knave. All went well for a time; but by and by the husband discovered the truth about his wife, and thereupon took her back to her father somewhere near Ongole. He, naturally, was very indignant at the trick that had been played upon him, and took pains to inform the Brahmins of the neighbourhood of what had been done. So gross a case as this could not be passed over, and therefore, after due enquiry, the delinquent was formally excommunicated. Not only had he associated himself with Pariahs, but he had caused a fellow-casteman to, unwittingly, render himself grossly impure. It was decided by the court that the facts justified the action taken by the accused and the case was dismissed. The wretched cheat could not be punished by the court for his villainy, as his offence was committed across the border, in Hyderabad territory, and so out of the jurisdiction of British courts of justice.

To return, however, to the more immediate subject of this chapter. In the event of a marriage being arranged between a young couple, and all preliminaries settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, a suitable day is fixed upon for the *Prathānam*, the formal 'engagement,' or betrothal. The day fixed upon must be a lucky one, and it is not settled without consulting an Astrologer or the Purōhita. At the pre-arranged time, the father of the boy with a friend or two, not the boy himself, proceeds to the

house of the girl's father, who calls together a few friends, and his Purōhita. It is also the proper thing to have musicians at this entertainment. The boy's father then produces certain presents he has brought for the girl, such as jewels, and cloths, and a ring. These things are handed over to the girl in the presence of them all, and she is arrayed in all the finery. The ring, which is of a peculiar shape, and which is carefully kept all through life, is put on the third or ring finger, and the elders present are called upon to bless the girl which they do saying, "may you like Lakshmi be happy and prosperous." During the giving of the present, the Purōhita says several mantrams of which the following specimen is given :—

सुमंगलीरियं वधूरिमां समेत पश्यत ।

सौभाग्यमस्यै दत्वां याथास्तं विपरेतन ॥

Draw near and behold this damsel, may she become a happy wife.

Having bestowed upon her prosperity, depart and cherish her in your heart.

At the close of the ceremony, bētel (*tāmbūlam*) is distributed to the guests, and rose water is sprinkled over them; after this, when with the aid of the astrologer, a suitable day for the marriage has been fixed, the friends depart and the betrothal is complete. It will have been gathered from the above quoted instances, that like an 'engagement' amongst Europeans, this Prathānam is not necessarily a binding ceremony; that is, it is possible, in the event of any obstacle arising, for this betrothal to be broken. Having thus dilated at some length upon the necessary preliminaries, we shall reserve the details of the marriage ceremonies, and things connected therewith, for another chapter.

# CHAPTER IX.

## HINDU MARRIAGES.—(*Continued.*)

## विवाह. (Vivāha.)

In whatever family the husband is contented with his wife, and the wife with her husband, in that house will fortune be assuredly permanent. (Manu III. 60).

In this chapter we purpose giving some idea of the complicated and prolonged ceremonial connected with the actual performance of a marriage. It astonishes a stranger, who may not know how fond the oriental mind is of such things, to observe how entirely, at such seasons, the Hindus give themselves up to the occasion. No thought of penalties, or any possible consequences seem strong enough to keep any one back, if there should happen to be a marriage going on in which he may directly or indirectly have a part, even if only that of an invited guest. There seems a positive fascination in the prospect of all these festivities; and, therefore, with or without leave, and at any risk, the ordinary Hindu will make it a point of duty or pleasure and inclination, as the case may be, to be present at a wedding.

The time chosen for the actual performance of the marriage should be in one of the five months beginning from February. It is not that marriages cannot be performed at other times during the year, but this is considered the most propitious. It is probable that this idea took its rise from convenience, seeing that during the period in question there is little agricultural labour to be done; and also, the crops having been harvested, money is in hand for the expenses that must be incurred. At the time fixed upon, the bride's father has his house cleaned up and decorated, and a *pandal* or large open booth is erected in front and at the back of the house to accommodate the guests

and friends. In municipalities, advantage has been taken of this custom to raise funds. Permission must be obtained from the authorities to erect these Pandals, and a tax is levied for the permission. The bridegroom's father sets out from his abode to go to that of the bride; sometimes the places are at a distance. He takes with him the bridegroom, and a great part of his household; also his own Purōhita and other friends. It is made a great holiday, and these visitors always have a band of musicians with them to cheer them on the journey; thus a marriage party is always known to be such by those who see them *en route*. On arrival, say, at the village of the bride, the party array themselves in their best finery, the band strikes up, and all await the coming out to meet them of the bride's parents and friends. Before going out to meet the party, the bride's father, if the parties are Brahmins, proceeds to the North-east of the village in search of some earth from the hillocks of white ants. This he takes home, and having prepared a space in the room where the chief marriage ceremony is to be performed, he fills five earthen or metal vessels with it, and places them in a row. In these vessels he plants nine different kinds of grain, and sprinkles them with milk and water, repeating a mantram. The grain thus treated, quickly sprouts during the days of the ceremonies. Five of the gods are invoked and requested to be present as witnesses at the ceremony; namely Indra (the god of storms), Varuna (the god of the waters), Chandra (the moon), Yama (the god of death), and Brahma. This ceremony is confined to Brahmins.

The Mantram above alluded to is:—

भूमिर्धेनुर्धरणी लोकधारिणी ॥

The earth like the cow bears all things and supplies all things.

The bride's father and friends, with the family priest, go out in a body to meet the bridegroom and

his party. These will have been waiting in some convenient spot, outside the town or village, in order to be ceremoniously received and welcomed. On meeting, there will be a mutual exchange of civilities, and gifts of betel, sprinkling with rose water, and rubbing upon the hands, and neck, and chest of each other of sandal wood paste. Finally, the guests are conducted to a lodging, previously prepared for them. This lodging must not be in the bride's house; that would be considered very improper. The marriage ceremony may commence on the evening of the arrival, and the whole affair lasts for five days.

The hour for the ceremony of the actual marriage has to be carefully fixed so as to be at the most propitious time, and it may fall during the day, or the night time. Be that as it may, a little before the time fixed upon, the party assembles in the apartment near the place with the sprouting grain before spoken of. The bridegroom is then duly bathed; this bathing is called *Mangalasnānam* (Blessed or fortunate bathing). After this, seated in a slightly raised platform previously prepared for the occasion, dressed in his ceremonially pure clothes and facing the east, he prays to Ganēsha (the god of obstacles) to be propitious. An image of Ganēsha is placed there, if one can be procured; otherwise they place a lump of saffron made into a paste, to represent him. After this he performs a ceremony of purification called *punyāhāvachanam.* In the meanwhile the bride, in another part of the house, has been going through much the same kind of thing. She has been bathing, and worshipping Ganēsha, and also *Gauri,* the wife of Siva, or *Lakshmi,* the wife of Vishnu, or both, as the case may be; this depending on the religious sect of the parties.

The bride's parents now come forward and, with necessary ceremonies, invest the bridegroom with the two skeins necessary to form the full sacred thread of a married man. (Vide Chapter on Yagnōpavītam). A curtain then being fixed up across the platform, the bride is brought out, seated in a kind of wicker basket, and is placed behind the curtain which separates the

young couple, so that they cannot actually see each other until later on in affairs. After this, the bride's father or mother proceeds to give to the bridegroom what is called *Mathuparkam.* This is a mixture of curds, milk, ghee, sugar, cummin, honey and other ingredients. A portion of this being placed in his hand he proceeds to eat it. This is repeated three times, and is supposed to be a kind of refresher after the fatigue already gone through and to prepare for the further ceremonies. The bride's parents then proceed to present the bridegroom with a beautiful cloth and other like things, including a kind of Yagnōpavītam made of one golden and two silver threads. The youth thereupon proceeds to array himself in the gorgeous presents.

The important ceremony called *Kanyādānam* (giving of the damsel) now takes place. This is done somewhat as follows. The bridegroom first makes the following declaration:—

> "I of such and such a name, family and tribe, &c., perform this taking of hands for the remission of my sins and for the satisfaction of the supreme God."

The bride's family priest then asks the bridegroom if he is willing to take so and so to wife. On his answering in the affirmative, the ends of the upper garments of the pair are tied together in what is called the Brahma knot. This is a peculiar knot already described in the chapter on the sacred thread. The priest, in tying this knot, says "*Vishvēth trātēt,*" that is, "You both must trust and be a prop to each other." They sit thus tied together until it may be necessary for them to move away from where they are sitting, when the knot is loosed. This tying of the cloths, which is an important part of the marriage ceremony, is repeated at various stages of the proceedings. Certain presents of jewels, and cloths, one of which should be of silk, are now given to the bride by the bridegroom's father. The bridegroom then again makes a declaration of his willingness to accept the bride, and her father makes a declaration of his

willingness to give her. The bride's mother then brings in a vessel of water with which her father proceeds to wash the bridegroom's feet, sprinkling some of the water on his own head. He then takes the right hand of the bride and placing it, underneath the curtain, in the right hand of the bridegroom, pours over the clasped hands some water from the vessel. Whilst this is being done, the father with the help of his Purōhita, repeats certain mantrams such as the following :—

कन्यां कनकसम्पन्नाम्
कनकाभरणैर्युताम् ।
दास्यामि विष्णवेभ्यम्
ब्रह्मलोकजिगीषया ॥

This damsel laden with gold,
And adorned with jewels of gold,
I give to thee who art like unto Vishnu,
In the hope that I may attain the heaven of Brahma.

विश्वंभरस्सर्वभूताः
साक्षिण्यः सर्वदेवताः ।
कन्यामिमां प्रदास्यामि
पितॄणां तारणाय वै ॥

Vishnumūrti, and all the elements,
And all the gods are witnesses,
That I give this damsel
For the salvation of my ancestors.

This pouring of water over the clasped hands is one of the most important ceremonies of the whole proceedings. After this is done, the curtain, which has hitherto separated the bride and bridegroom, is removed, and they see each other, possibly for the

first time in their lives. It must be borne in mind that the parties will probably be very young; the bride must be young, and may possibly be a mere infant of three or four years of age.

A very curious ceremony is gone through at this stage of the proceedings. An ox-yoke is brought in, and a cord made of darbha grass is tied round the waist of the bride by the bridegroom. This cord is supposed to represent one of those used to place round the neck of the ox when it is yoked, and it is easy to see the origin and significance of the act. The yoke is now held over the bride in such a manner that one of the holes in it shall come right over her head. The *Mangalasūtram*, which will be described further on, is now taken and held under the hole through which water is poured by the bridegroom. The water trickles down the Mangalasūtram on to the bride's head. During this the young couple are made to say to each other, *nāti charāmani*—I will never leave thee.

The next ceremony is the important one of tying on the *Mangalasūtram*. This is a saffron coloured thread or cord to which is attached a small gold ornament; it is fastened round the neck, and hangs down in front, like a locket. This is always worn by married women, as is the wedding ring among Europeans, and it is never parted with, for any consideration whatever, until the death of either party. Thus, a woman not having on the Mangalasūtram is a sign of widowhood.

A beautiful cloth is now given to the bride by her father, and she departs for a little in order to array herself in it; on her return she is accompanied by her female relatives. The bridegroom now takes the Mangalasūtram; and, with an appropriate declaration, ties it round the neck of the bride. Whilst this operation is being performed, a loud noise is always made by the musicians, with their instruments, and others present by clapping their hands and the like. This is to prevent any *sneezing* from being heard. Sneezing is considered a very bad omen; and for fear any one might be seized with an

attack during this important operation, the loud noise is made to drown so unlucky a sound, in the event of such an accident. The declaration which the bridegroom, prompted by the priest, gives utterance to on tying the cord is as follows :—

मांगल्यं तंतुनानेन
मम जीवन हेतुना ।
कंठे बध्नामि सुभगे
त्वं जीवशरदां शतम् ॥

This Mangalasūtram,
For the lengthening of my life,
Oh damsel! I tie to thy neck
Do thou live for a hundred years.

It may interest some to know that in the marriages of Native Christians, this custom of tying the Mangalasūtram round the neck is retained. It is used instead of the marriage ring; and in the Christian marriage service when, according to the English rule, the bridegroom places the ring on the finger of the bride saying, " With this ring I thee wed", &c. amongst Native Christians, he holds the cord round her neck saying, " With this Mangalasūtram I thee wed", &c. and then, tying the cord in a firm knot, he leaves it there, never to be removed until the death of either party. If she becomes a widow, it is customary to leave off wearing the Mangalasūtram, as amongst the rest of the Hindus.

Whilst the Mangalasūtram is being tied on, the Purōhitas and those present who may be able to join in, chant, what is called, the *Mangalāshtakam* or eight marriage blessings. When the chanting is concluded, some of those present throw coloured rice (*akshata*) upon the couple, by way of blessing them. One of the eight marriage blessings is as follows :—

जानक्याः कमलामलांजलिपुटे याः पद्मरागायिताः
न्यस्ता राघवमस्तके च विलसत्कुंदप्रसूनायिताः ।

स्त्रस्ता:श्यामल्कायकांतिकलित या इंद्रनीलायिता:
मुक्ता:स्तास्शुभद भवंतु भवतां श्रीरामवैवाहिका: ॥

The pearls in the lotus like hands of Sita which shone like rubies;
When poured on the head of Rama appeared white like jessamine flowers,
And falling over his dark blue body shone like sapphires.
May those pearls thus used at the marriage of Rama, give happiness unto you.

An ornament called *Bhāshikam* is also worn by the bride and bridegroom when they may be seated together at any time during the five days during which the ceremony lasts. This ornament is usually made of twigs and coloured thread; it is worn tied on to the forehead by a string passing round the head.

At some stage or other of the proceedings there is a peculiar ceremony, which is one of various minor ones we have not described. Some rice, which has been steeped in milk, is brought, and the bridegroom places a portion of this into the hand of the bride. Over this he sprinkles some drops of ghee, with a betel leaf, saying :—

पुण्यं वर्धत शांतिरस्तु ॥

May righteousness increased! peace be unto you!

He then takes some of the rice from her hand and puts it on her head. She then takes some of it and puts it upon his head. This is done several times, after which they both do it at the same time, putting some of the rice upon each other's head.

In ancient days it was customary for the bride's father to present to the bridegroom a fatted calf, to be used for food at the marriage feast. In these days, however, this custom has given way to presenting cloths and such like things.

After the tying of the Mangalasūtram, the priest places a few grains of coloured rice (*akshata*) into

the hands of those present, who in company chant some verses from the Vēdas, as a blessing. After this, all present throw the rice on to the heads of the married pair. May it not be that the modern English custom of throwing rice after a newly married couple, arose from this Indian rite? There are many similar ways in which English customs have originated from our connection with India. The following is a specimen of the verses chanted on this occasion:—

इंद्रश्रेष्ठानि द्रविणानि धेहि
चित्तिं दक्षस्य सुभगत्वमस्मे ।
पोषं रयीणामरिष्टिं तनूनां
स्वाद्मानं वाचः सुदिनत्वमह्नां ॥

O Indra! grant to these wealth and prosperity.
Grant wisdom, strength, beauty and vigour,
Increase of riches and bodily health.
Add also eloquence of speech and happy days.

At this stage of the proceedings the bridegroom, duly prompted by the family priest, proceeds to perform a *hōmam* or sacrifice of fire. This is done in the sacred fire which is made and kept up in the centre of the prepared place before spoken of, during the whole of the marriage festival days. The hōmam is performed by dropping into the fire certain kinds of twigs, and also rice and ghee, at the same time repeating mantrams, a specimen of which will be given further on.

The next ceremony is called *Saptapadi* or seven steps. This is the most important ceremony in the whole marriage rite, and in a court of justice this is the test ceremony by which is decided whether a disputed marriage was completely performed or not. Manu also makes this the complete and irrevocable act, upon which the rite is complete:—

The nuptial texts are a certain rule in regard to wedlock, and the bridal contract is known by the learned to be com-

plete and irrevocable on the seventh step of the married pair, hand in hand, after those texts have been pronounced. (VIII. 227.)

The ceremony is performed as follows. The couple holding each other by the hand, walk three times round the sacred fire, each circle being supposed to be done in seven steps. Whilst they are thus marching round, the Purōhita repeats a certain mantram, the bridegroom joining in with him if be able to do so. The mantram is supposed to be said by the bridegroom to the bride and is as follows :—

सखा सप्तपदा भव
सखायौ सप्तदा बभूव ।
सख्यं ते गमेयं
सख्यात्ते मा योषं ।
सख्यान्मे म योष्ठाः
समयाव संकल्पावहै ॥

By taking seven steps with me do thou become my friend.
By taking seven steps together we become friends.
I shall become thy friend.
I shall never give up thy friendship.
Do thou never give up my friendship.
Let us live together and take counsel one of another.

With this rite the marriage may be said to be indissolubly completed, and upon this, bētel and fruit are distributed to those present, after which those who, through religious differences, cannot eat together with the household take their leave. The women present then sing marriage songs, which are taken from the marriage songs of Rāma and Sīta. Whilst singing, they hold in their hands small lamps, fed with ghee. The following is a specimen of these songs taken from the Telugu—some attempt has been

made to present the ideas expressed in an English form :—

### THE LAMP HYMN TO RĀMA.

*Refrain.*—Worship and blessing,
Be unto thee Rāma.
Own spouse to sweet Sīta,
And giver of joy.

1. Thou lov'd one of Vasava,
Whose beauty is known.
Thou son of Kamsalya,
Who guardest thine own.
Worship and blessing, &c.

2. Made fragrant with sandal,
Rouged bright to behold,
Resplendent with garlands
And bracelets of gold.
Worship and blessing, &c.

3. With necklace of tulasi,
And ears set with gems.
With person in beauty,
To rival the heavens.
Worship and blessing, &c.

4. Born unto Dēviki,
Great in the skies,
Own guru to Cupid,
To thee our love flies.
Worship and blessing, &c.

5. With eyes like the lotus,
And face like the moon.
Thine eagle drawn car,
Is to thee for a throne.
Worship and blessing, &c.

6. Most glorious thy Beauty,
In Vēdas we sing.
By faithful and pure,
Thou are served as a king.
Worship and blessing, &c.

7. Thou lord of mount Bhadra,
Whose praise is made known.
By singers like Rāmdas,
The lotus souled one.
Worship and blessing, &c.

Sometime after darkness has set in, the ceremony called *Sthālīpākam* is performed. This is done as follows. The company being assembled, a little rice is cooked in a small vessel on the sacred fire, when, after several suppressions of the breath, and repeating *Om bhuh, Om bhuvaha, Om suvaha* (the names of the three worlds of the Hindus), the bridegroom mentions the exact time that then is, naming the age, year, day, and hour, and also the place where they are at the time, &c. (*Sankalpam.*) He then makes this declaration. "I make this Sthālīpākam, on behalf of this damsel, in order to please the supreme God." After which he sprinkles ghee over some of the cooked rice, and taking pinches of it up in his two fingers and thumb, performs a hōmam by casting it upon the fire, doing this several times and repeating the following mantram :—

अग्नये स्वाहा अग्नय इदं न मम अग्नये स्विष्टकृते स्वाहा
अग्नयेस्विष्टकृत इदं न मम ॥

May this become a sacrifice to Agni (the god of fire). To him this is given; it is not mine. May this become a sacrifice to him who fulfils our desires. This belongs to him; it is not mine.

The last ceremony of this first day, before taking food, is the Purōhita taking the bride and bridegroom outside the house, and pointing out to them a very small star called *Arundhati*, bidding them pay homage to it. This star is near the middle one in the tail of *Ursa Major* and is named after *Arundhati*, the wife of *Vasishtah*, one of the seven *Rishis*. It is not clear what is meant by this ceremony, but doubtless it had some meaning in olden

time. This Arundhati is said to have been a pattern wife, and probably what is here meant is to draw the attention of the bride to that fact, and bid her follow so good an example.

After this the bride and bridegroom are made to take food together, eating from the same leaf. This is rather a noteworthy act, as the only time during their life when the husband and wife eat together is at this marriage feast. The duty of the wife is to serve her husband whilst he eats, and when he has done, to partake of what is left of the food, using as a plate the leaf from which her husband has just breakfasted, or dined, as the case may be. This unsocial, and, to Europeans, most forbidding custom, in universal amongst Hindus of every rank and caste. At the same time as the bride and bridegroom are partaking of their "love feast," the family and guests sit down—the males and females apart—all duly bathed and prepared for food, and partake of the marriage feast. Generally a very large number come together for this. The parents of the bride, however, do not sit down with their guests, but wait for their meal until all the feasting is over.

On the morning of the second day the bride is duly decorated and loaded with jewels, partly marriage gifts, but some probably borrowed for the occasion. Then seated in a marriage palanquin, and accompanied by dancing women, and a band of music, she is taken in procession to the house where the bridegroom's father and friends lodge. The bridegroom then, all gorgeously arrayed, joins her, and is seated opposite to her in the palanquin, and they are carried round in a grand procession back to the bride's house. On their return home from this procession, and also when they return from any of the processions, as they alight from the palanquin, their feet are washed by some attendants, and they are made to speak each other's name. This also is noteworthy, as it is not customary for husband and wife ever to mention each other's name, and it is amusing to see the various shifts that are resorted to in order to avoid doing so. Even in the case of a

poor woman, if asked by one strange to the customs of the country, what is her husband's name, instead of replying, she will, with a titter, ask some one standing by, perhaps her own child, to mention it. Sometimes for fun, romping girls will tease a little wife to make her say her husband's name; perhaps they will shut her up in a room, or in some other way imprison her, and not let her out until she has mentioned what is usually so sacred and unmentionable. It must not be thought that Hindu lads and lasses are less capable of fun and frolic than their Āryan brothers and sisters of colder climes. These things serve to show how ingrained are national customs and prejudices.

The day is passed in singing marriage songs, and feasting, with a few minor ceremonies. In the evening there is again a grand procession, much like that of the morning, except that they make a longer round, and fireworks are let off at various places on the way. On arriving at home, a hōmam is performed, and the second day's affairs close with the usual feastings. The following is a specimen of the songs sung on such an occasion. It is taken from the Telugu, and is a lullaby to Krishna. It may be well to explain that *Kari* means an elephant, and *Makari* a crocodile; and the allusion is to where Krishna is said to have rescued an elephant from a crocodile that would else have destroyed it; *Kamsa* was a demon King of Mathura, destroyed by Krishna; and *Nanda* was a herdsman, the foster father of Krishna. We have again ventured the attempt to present the song in an English dress :—

### A KRISHNA LULLABY.

*Refrain.*—Come let us sing sweet lullaby.

1. Come ye with eyes that twinkle bright,
And sing your sweetest lullaby.
The cradle swings with jewels set,
And there our baby Krishna lies.
Come let us sing sweet lullaby.

2. To him who did in mercy save
Lost *Kari* from fierce *Makari.*
To him who ever happy is,
And rescues those who do believe,
Come let us sing sweet lullaby.

3. To him who slew king Kamsa vile,
Who joy dispenses to the good.
To him who saved from evils great,
The parents whom he ever loved.
Come let us sing sweet lullaby.

4. To Cupid's father, beauteous one,
Who stole the butter, Nanda's son,
To him who bears mount Mandara,
Loved Krishna, king of Kēshava
Come let us sing sweet lullaby.

On the morning of the third day there is the usual procession, after which there is a more or less elaborate ceremony called *Sadasyam* or meeting of the elders. During this ceremony presents are made of cloths and money, to various people, and the forenoon closes with a grand feast as usual. In the evening a very elaborate procession is made. They first go to the bank of some tank or river, or some other nice shady place, where carpets are spread, and all being seated, betel is served out and rose-water sprinkled, after which various games are indulged in, and fun is made. This being over, the procession again forms, and with much blazing of torches and burning of coloured lights, braying of horns and beating of drums, singing of dancing girls, and letting off of fireworks, they slowly make a grand progress through the streets home again. It is by no means a pleasant thing to meet one of these marriage processions in the narrow streets of a village, or the crowded parts of a bazaar, when returning home after dark from an evening ride. The blare of the trumpets, the din of the drums, the swishing rush and pistol-like report of the rockets, together with the glare of the torches and coloured lights, all combined form a scene that is enough to make any animal nervous that has not received the education of a trained charger. For my

own part, I know I have often been thankful to get clear of such processions without accident to myself, or without any harm being done, by the timid horse, to any one of the surging, shouting, particoloured crowd that goes to make a Hindu holiday.

The fourth day is passed in much the same way, except that one of the proper things to be done is for the bridegroom to pretend to be angry and sulky. He even goes so far as to start off in his palanquin to run away. The father of the bride then goes out to find him, and tries to appease his anger, promising to give him presents of various kinds. He is supposed to take advantage of this to ask for various things as presents, a house for instance, or cattle, or money, or lands. The father-in-law then promises to give so and so, upon which the youth shakes off his pretended sulks and returns to the festivities. This amusing and somewhat ridiculous farce, seems to be a peculiar custom kept up as an opportunity for demanding, and giving, additional presents, by way of dowry to the bride. In the evening, after the usual feast, the most elaborate and prolonged of the various festal parades take place, with its accompaniments of torches, lime-lights, and fireworks, and singing of dancing girls, with other marks of festivity so dear to the heart of a Hindu. Whilst the bride's home is partly deserted, through the inmates being out with the procession, the friends of the bridegroom have some fun by going to the house and removing any useful thing they can lay their hands on; such as the ropes for drawing water, necessary culinary vessels and the like, and the consternation at the loss on the return of the procession is a source of much amusement.

Very early in the morning of the fifth day, say about three o'clock, the last hōmam is performed (*Shēsha hōmam*) upon which the gods, who have been invoked to be present at the proceedings, are solemnly dismissed to their several worlds. The verses and mantrams said upon this occasion are as follows :—

गछंतु देवाः यथासुखं ॥

O ye gods depart in peace.

यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजंत देवाः
तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन् ।
ते ह नाकं महिमानस्सचन्ते
यत्र पूर्वे साध्यास्संतु देवाः ॥

The gods have done sacrifice unto the supreme god,
By rites instituted at the beginning.
These gods depart hence and reach their glorious abode.
May they depart to the world whence they came.

तत्र सुखं गच्छन्तु ॥

May ye arrive there in peace!

In the evening of this fifth and last day, a final ceremony is performed called *Nākabali*, or sacrifice to the inhabitants of heaven. The previously mentioned prepared place is again adorned and smeared with cowdung, as usual, and a number of small lights, fed with ghee, are placed in a square formed of coloured pots. Around these pots is wound a kind of fence, formed of nine strands of cotton thread. Several mantrams are repeated by the Purōhita, in the presence of the assembled company, invoking the presence of the whole thirty-three crores of gods (330 millions) of the Hindu pantheon. These are duly honoured and worshipped, by prayers and offerings of cooked rice. The bride and bridegroom are then tied together with the Brahma knot, before spoken of, and marched three times round the burning lights, by the priest, who meanwhile repeats certain mantrams.

Sometime after the Nākabali, there is more singing and music, and betel is again distributed. Various bits of romping and fun are then indulged in. The bride and bridegroom are each seized upon by any two present, and carried about at a run; during this, white and coloured powders, and coloured water are freely thrown about upon each other, and there is a good deal of frolic and amusement.

After this, what is called in Telugu, the *Appaginta*, or final delivering over, takes place. This is always a most sorrowful proceeding, and the bride's mother, and brothers, and sisters, and other relatives weep much, and in various ways express their grief as they give up their dear one into other hands. The ceremony is somewhat as follows. A dish of milk is brought in, and the bride places her right hand in the milk; over her hand the bridegroom's father, and mother, and sister place their right hands, when the priest repeats some verses of which the following is one:—

अष्टवर्षा भवेत्कन्या
पुत्रवत्पालिता मया ।
इदानीं तव पुत्रस्य
दत्ता स्नेहेन पाल्यताम् ॥

This damsel has attained her eighth year.
She has been fostered by me like a son.
She is now given to thy son;
Protect her in love.

When this has proceeded far enough, a bundle of rice is tied to the waist of the bride, and she is once more seated in the palanquin opposite her husband; they then set out to go to the village of the bridegroom, thus bringing the prolonged and intricate ceremonial to a close.

The bride is supposed to stay for three days in her husband's house, when she is taken back to her own home, there to remain until she has attained a fit age to discharge the duties of a wife.

When the young wife has arrived at a suitable age, notification of the fact is sent to the husband's parents, and the occasion is celebrated by various feastings and festivities. The parents and friends on both sides consult as to a propitious time for, what may be called, the taking home of the bride. At the time fixed upon, the husband and his friends proceed to the

bride's home, and there certain ceremonies and feastings take place, and there is also much distributing of cloths, fruit, betel and other presents. After a few days thus spent, the bride is taken away by her husband to his own home, which she henceforth shares with him.

It may be well just to mention that, sometimes, in fulfilment of a vow, the marriage takes place at some more or less celebrated place of pilgrimage. In that event, a pilgrimage is made by all concerned to the favoured shrine, and the marriage takes place there. In such cases, all the ceremonies are crowded into one day, and some, of lesser importance, are omitted altogether.

In this description of the mode of procedure followed in the marriages of Hindus, many customary rites and ceremonies, of lesser importance, are not mentioned, but a fair idea has been given of the chief of them, and enough has been said to convey a tolerably clear notion of what a Hindu marriage means. It must also be borne in mind, as was before mentioned, that whilst the chief acts of ritual are the same amongst all Hindus, many minor ceremonies may differ much in different parts of this vast country, and amongst the different races and nations who profess the Brahminical religion. Some account of unorthodox marriages will be given in the next chapter.

It will easily be seen what an expensive affair such marriages are, and what, comparatively, large sums of money are thus squandered. There is no more fruitful source of debt, that curse of India, than these marriage customs, and the wasteful expenditure incurred at funeral ceremonies, of which mention will be made in a subsequent chapter. The presents of cloths, and jewels, and money, the feasting and feeling, the elaborate processions, and the necessary hiring of bearers and musicians and nautch girls, together with the fireworks and lights, all these things swallow up large sums of money, and often the chief supply comes from the bags of the money-lenders. No matter if the parties concerned are poor, the laws of custom are so inexorable that their demands must be

complied with, even though by so doing a millstone of debt is hung around the neck to be a drag and a burden all through life. As we have already seen, many of the better minded of the people groan under these and similar bonds, and occasionally one hears a feeble voice raised up in protest, but the Hindu is too conservative and too wanting in firmness of mind, to lead one to entertain much hope of a radical change in such matters for many long years to come.

# CHAPTER X.

# UNORTHODOX HINDU MARRIAGES.

## अधर्मविवाह. (Adharmavivāham).

From the blameless nuptial rites of men spring a blameless progeny; from the reprehensible, a reprehensible offspring; let mankind, therefore studiously avoid the culpable forms of Marriage. (Manu III. 42.)

In the two preceding chapters, the marriage rites and customs of the ordinary orthodox Hindus, and especially of the Brahmins, have been described, with some detail. The Brahmanical rites may, to a certain extent, be taken as representing those of most orthodox Hindus, for, though the details differ in different castes, and especially amongst the various and multifarious divisions of what are included under the name of Sudras, there is a, more or less, general resemblance in the main points of importance. There are, however, a vast number of people who, though nominally Hindus, do not strictly follow the rules and regulations of the Brahmanical religion, and this fact is manifest, perhaps in more than any other way, in the rites and ceremonies connected with marriage. To some extent those here intended have, in the course of centuries, become absorbed into the elastic fold of Hinduism, using that word in its widest meaning; but, strictly speaking, in a large number of cases, whilst nominal Hindus, they are really mere demon worshippers, or something very akin thereto. In giving some description of these unorthodox marriages, it may be well to take something that stands, as it where, midway between the Brahmanical, or orthodox ceremonies, and those which are almost, if not entirely foreign to them. As representing those that stand midway between the two we may take the *Māla* weddings as fairly representative.

The name Māla is a Telugu one for Pariahs; but the Mālas of the Telugu country do not appear to be so low in the scale of actual society as the Pariahs of the more southern parts of the Peninsula, and they moreover form a large percentage of the people. It is true they are outcastes who cannot, strictly speaking, take a place in the caste system at all; but they worship, after their own fashion, Hindu deities, and seem, by degrees, to adopt Hindu prejudices more and more, as they rise in the world through that industry for which they are noted. Most of this class are connected with agriculture, either as farm labourers or small farmers; and many of them, especially in the irrigated section of the country, own fairly large farms and are tolerably well-to-do. It will be seen in the following details as to their marriage rites and ceremonies, how many things there are which are evidently in imitation of the true Brahmanical rites, and also wherein they essentially differ.

When a desirable alliance has been fixed upon amongst the Mālas, and agreed to by both sides, the father of the youth, accompanied by several of the head men of the village, proceeds to the maiden's abode. This may be in the same hamlet, or in one at some greater or less distance. A consultation is then held, between the friends of both parties, as to the value of mutual presents and the like details, and, if all is agreed upon, the youth's father produces a Rupee, to which the maiden's father adds half a Rupee. This money is at once expended in paying for drinks for the friends at a neighbouring drinking-shop, after which a feast is given by the bride's people. At this time, the girl's people fix a day upon which they will visit the young man's home; and at the time agreed upon, the young lady's father and friends proceed to the youth's home, where there is more drinking and feasting. Upon this occasion, a fortunate period having been beforehand fixed upon, the day for the wedding is definitely settled.

The next thing is the Prathānam, or formal betrothal; this often takes place on the same day as the wedding proper, especially if the parties all belong to

the same village. The youth does not appear upon this occasion, and the maiden sits quietly in the house; the Prathānam takes place at the bride's house. The elders and friends of both sides sit in opposite groups, when the young man's father hands over the jewels, and cloths, and various other things he has promised as presents to the bride, and to her people. The friends on both sides then formally express their willingness to give and receive the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be. When this has been done, a skein of thread, adorned with saffron to represent the Mangalasūtram cord, is produced, and round it is entwined a cloth brought by the bridegroom's people, or failing that, the turban or head-cloth of the head man of the youth's village. This is then taken hold of by elders from both sides and is carried to where the maiden is seated in the house, when it is carefully placed over her head round her neck. This constitutes the Prathānam. There is afterwards a feast given by the girl's parents to the village, and the bētel and other like things, brought by the youth's father for the occasion, are distributed all round.

The marriage itself takes place at the young man's house. As a rule, the ceremony is performed at night; should it take place in the day-time, a young bull must be given by the youth's people, which, after being branded, is set free to wander about at its own sweet will, and to be ever after, considered as a divine being. This, however, is only done by comparatively wealthy people, as a bit of ostentatious display. The Dāsari, or Māla priest must be present on this occasion, and also a band of musicians; and there will always be, besides, a large concourse of friends and relatives. Probably in imitation of the Brahmanical ceremony described in the previous chapter, a place is prepared in the house on the western side near the wall, upon which are placed a number of earthen pots duly adorned with various colours, and called in Telugu *Arivēni* or *Airēni*. These usually number eleven or thirteen, two of which should be very large; in some cases there is even a larger number. Brahmins do not use the Arivēni; but they are always used at the marriages of Sūdras

and in some cases of Vaisyas and so called Kshatriyas. Wound round the mouth or opening of the pots is a skein of yellow thread. In front of these various lamps are put, which must be kept alight for five days. Before the lighted lamps is scattered earth which has been fetched from the tank, and in which have been mixed nine kinds of grain. This earth is called in Telugu *Panta bangāram*, or golden produce, and it is brought from the tank, with much ceremony, by five women, accompanied by a band of music, and having a cloth held up over them as a kind of canopy.

In front of the house door, a Pandal or temporary shed is erected, underneath which a small star shaped mound of earth is prepared, and adorned with coloured pigments. This is called, in Telugu, *Pendli arugu*, or the marriage mound. This is kept adorned for some time until it may have been washed away by the rains, or in some other way caused to disappear. By the side of this are placed four low stools, and the bride, and bridegroom are brought forward and seated upon two of them, the other two being occupied by a female relative of the bride, and a boy relative of the youth; all sit facing towards the east. The priest then proceeds to tie on to the forehead of each of the pair the ornament called Bāsikam, already mentioned in the previous chapter as being made of sticks and coloured thread. That on the youth is triangular in shape whilst that on the maiden is oblong. These are worn during the whole of the marriage ceremony at any time when the rites are being performed. The nails of the pair, both hands and feet, are then paired by a barber, or one of the Musicians; the operator duly receiving a fee; after which coloured rice is applied to the forehead of the couple by some of those present. The pair are now bathed and adorned with gay clothing, and return to the Pandal when they are tied together with the *Brahma knot*, which has already been described. They are then made to stand in front of the prepared place (*pendli arugu*), when the Brahma knot is untied, and a cloth is held up between them as a temporary curtain so as to hide them from each other. A silver ring is now placed, by one of

the musicians, on the second toe of each foot of the bride, and a small vessel containing rice is tied up in her cloth round her waist; after which the couple are caused to place the right foot of each upon that of the other. The cloth screen is now held horizontally between the pair, and over this they place their hands into which the priest pours rice made yellow with saffron. The priest now ties a rolled up green leaf (*kankanam*) to the wrist of the bridegroom as a kind of temporary bracelet. The bridegroom then, pouring the rice from his hands into the cloth, proceeds to tie a similar leaf to the wrist of the bride. These mock bracelets must stay on for several days. The Mangalasūtram is now brought forward with much ceremony, including performing by the attendant Musicians, and the bridegroom ties it to the neck of the bride. During this operation the priest says a Sanscrit blessing to the following effect. It may be noted that the *Dāsari* or priest who told us this, was unable to give the meaning of the Sanskrit words used—he simply said them off without knowing their meaning:—

### THE DÁSARI'S BLESSING.

We adore Brahma, the eternal-invisible, immaculate, in whom are all perfections, and who is the support of all the worlds.

They alone are Pandits (learned men) who know him who is the eternal light to the three worlds, who is the creator, preserver and destroyer, the Omniscient God.

Worship Rāmachendra who, born of the dynasty of the sun, is associated with Sīta and Lakshmanna; who is served by Hanuman and others, whose whole nature is love, yea who is the very personification of love.

We adore Rāma who sits on the golden throne, who is worshipped by Brahma and others, and who is the giver of all good things.

O supreme God! at what time any worship thy lotus like feet, that, to them, is an auspicious time, that is a propitious star, that is a favourable lunar day, that is a lucky conjunction of planets.

(The priest) must repeat the eight nuptial blessings. He must repeat the proper mantrams at the feet washing ceremony, and when the Mangalasūtram is tied on; also when the hands are clasped, and when the rice is poured on each others heads. When the Brahma knot is tied, then we must visit Arundathi.

Ye having worshipped the gods near the Arivēni, and having made obeisance unto them, peace be unto you.

This tying of the Mangalasūtram constitutes the binding rite of the whole ceremony. After tying this the youth again takes up into his hands the rice which he had poured into the cloth—the bride holds hers in her hands all this time. He now pours his rice upon her head and she pours hers upon his. This rice is supposed to represent pearls. The screen cloth is now taken quite away and the cloths of the couple are again tied together in the Brahma knot, upon which the friends who are present scatter rice upon the heads of the pair. The bride's father then brings forward a ring and a new loin cloth, which the priest takes, proclaiming in a loud voice that the father has given these things to the bridegroom; the latter then puts the ring on his finger. The friends on either side now present to the pair the wedding presents they may have brought—money, or cloths, or ornaments, or brass and copper vessels, and such like things. It is considered the proper thing for presents of equal value to those thus received to be given by the recipients at any marriages in connection with those who thus present them, and much ill feeling arises when this may not be done. After this the fathers of both parties walk round the sacred place (*pendli arugu*) three times, each carrying one of the *arivēni* pots. When this is all over the priest takes the couple and shows to them *arundathi*, as before described, and they make obeisance to it. The young couple now join hands by the bridegroom hooking his left little finger into that of her right hand and thus joined they go to the house and stand in the doorway of the room in which are the lights and coloured pots before spoken of. Inside the room are some female

friends who sing for sometime, upon which the newly married pair give the singers some present of money. They are then allowed to enter and stand before the Arivēni pots and lights to which they do obeisance. A specimen is given of the songs thus sing. It will be observed how very simple these songs are, but it must be borne in mind what class of people the singers are, and that folk-songs are always of a very simple nature. These specimens are taken from the Telugu, and an attempt has been made to put them into English dress, whilst keeping, as near as possible, the ideas and intentions of the original. It should be premised that it is a common custom at these marriages, for the bridegroom's sister to ask in marriage for her son, the hand of the bride's future daughter. This is in accordance with the *Mēnarikam* custom spoken of in a former chapter. The song we are about to quote is supposed to be a dialogue between the bridegroom, who is standing outside the house with his bride, and his sister who is inside. He wishes to enter the house and she refuse admittance in order to extract from him the promise he at length gives. The song is sung antiphonally by two groups of the women. It will be at once seen that the shower of pearls and diamonds spoken of is in allusion to the couple pouring rice over each other head after the tying of the Mangalasūtram, as a conclusion to that binding rite of the ceremony:—

### UNBOLT THE CLOSED DOOR.

1. The white pearly shower has now fallen;
   Your sister is drenched to the skin.
   Dear sister unbolt the closed door,
   Why tarry now please let us in.

2. The white pearly shower has not fallen;
   Our sister's not drenched to the skin.
   How can we unbolt the closed door?
   'Tis now that our dispute begins.

3. The shower of great diamonds has fallen,
   Your sister is drenched to the skin.
   Dear sister unbolt the closed door,
   Why tarry now please let us in.

4. No shower of great diamonds has fallen,
Our sister's not drenched to the skin.
How can we unbolt the closed door?
'Tis now that our dispute begins.

5. The shower of rich gems has now fallen;
Your sister is drenched to the skin.
Dear sister unbolt the closed door;
Why tarry now please let us in.

6. No shower of rich gems has now fallen,
Our sister's not drenched to the skin.
How can we unbolt the closed door?
'Tis now that our dispute begins.

7. I'll give you a sheet and young heifer;
My daughter I'll give to your son.
So sister unbolt the closed door;
Why tarry now please let us in.

The bridal pair are now admitted into the house, as already mentioned, and take up a position before the Arivēni, when all the women in concert sing some such song as the following:—

### THE ARIVÉNI SONG.

1. Oh Potter; Oh Potter! go make Arivēni,
We'll have a fine wedding at home.
Make clay Arivēni and small ones of silver,
The time for the marriage has come.

2. The potter has kneaded the clay all so deftly,
With legs all so crooked they tell
On Tuesday he chose it; on Friday he shaped it,
On Sunday he finished it well.

3. The potter's wife smiling to see Arivēni,
In honour of Lahshmi thus made.
She took them and placed them with joy and with
laughter,
To stand in the house in the shade.

4. The priest he is witness that all is done rightly,
   The Brahma knot sacred is tied;
   And Cupid who clasped the two bracelets is witness,
   That all is done well for the bride.

5. Why do we this worship to our Arivēni?
   For sons to be born to this pair.
   All these will be granted with wealth and contentment,
   And joy with which none can compare.

By this time it is daylight and the company all separate for some time, after which there is a procession through the village of the newly married couple, and their friends, accompanied by the usual musicians. A white cloth is held over the couple as a kind of canopy; and there is also a supply of bētel to distribute to friends on the way. If the couple are farm labourers, they will, perhaps, go to the house of their master, and receive something by way of wedding presents. The procession is usually on foot, but sometimes the bridegroom will be on horseback with the bride sitting in front of him, if she happens to be a little girl; otherwise, if the people are well-to-do, she may be seated in a palanquin, or she may walk by the side of the horse. The procession finishes by the couple worshipping the village goddess, which is usually represented by a rough stone image, placed under a tree, or on the bank of the tank, or some such place.

This procession is followed by a great feast given by the father of the bridegroom, and for which a pig is often slaughtered to form the wedding dish. After the feast, there is sometimes a game, similar to that already described, in which the young couple are hoisted up on men's shoulders and throw coloured powder at each other as they are danced around. This is called *dēgāta*, or the hawking game. On the fifth day the temporary bracelets, before spoken of, are taken off, with some few ceremonies, and the bride goes on a visit to her mother's house. One of the ceremonies, on the taking off of the bracelets, is

for the head man of the village to place some boiled rice into the bride's hands, when she, standing before her husband, says "In trouble and in joy I will always cleave to thee and will never leave thee." She then places the rice into his hands and he says similar words.

The marriages of the *Mādigas* or skinners and tanners, are performed in much the same way, only there is usually more spirit drinking than is the case with the Mālas, and consequently there is more brawling and noise.

For the nuptial ceremonies of the non-orthodox tribes, which will now be described, I am indebted to the Government Manuals of the Nellore, Madura, and Nilgiri Districts, reference to which will afford much interesting information concerning the various tribes in question.

The marriage rite of the *Yeruklas* is said to be of a very simple character. These are a tribe of wandering gypsy kind of people, whose temporary huts may be seen on the outskirts of villages throughout the country. They are said to practise polygamy, and the marriage ceremony usually takes place on a Sunday. Various kinds of worship are performed on the previous day, but on the Sunday fixed upon, rice mixed with turmeric is poured on the heads of the couple and the Mangalasūtram is tied round the neck of the bride. This simple ceremony completes the marriage.

Amongst the *Yanadies*, another migratory aboriginal tribe, who gain their livelihood chiefly by hunting, and making and selling mats and leaf-plates, and gathering and selling firewood, and other jungle produce, the marriage seems to be based on the consent of the parties themselves. The man and woman arrange the matter between themselves, and afterwards, at a gathering of friends, bētel is distributed, the *Mangalasūtram* is tied on, and the woman is taken to her husband's house.

Hitherto we have been speaking of things as they are in the Telugu country. If we go further south, into the Tamil speaking parts, we find much variety

amongst the various aboriginal tribes as to the marriage rite.

The *Kārakat Vellālans*, for instance, who live on and near the Palni Mountains in South India, have very peculiar marriage customs. The ceremony is performed in a booth, erected for the purpose before the house door of the bride. The bride and bridegroom are seated on the floor with their faces towards the east. A lamp is kept burning on a stool near where they sit, whilst a measure of grain, and a rude image of *Ganēsha*, made of cow dung, is placed near them. After both of them have prostrated themselves before the symbol, the bridegroom receives the *Mangalasūtram*, from some of the relatives present, which he proceeds to tie round the bride's neck. At the same time, a bowl of milk is brought in which have been steeped a few leaves of the Peepul tree (Ficus Religiosa). The relatives on both sides then sprinkle some of this milk upon the heads of the pair. The newly married couple then prostrate themselves before their several relatives, and the day's ceremony is concluded with a feast and a formal distribution of bētel. This concludes the marriage ceremony. On the following day the bridegroom gives a grand feast, when various marriage presents are distributed to the bride and her relatives.

Amongst the *Maravans*, a people mostly in the extreme South East of the peninsula, the marriage ceremonies are very strange and unusual. After a marriage has been agreed upon by the principal members of two families, a few of the relatives of the intended bridegroom go to the house of the bride, and then, with or without her consent, and even perhaps without having sought the consent of the bridegroom, they tie upon her neck the *Mangalasūtram* whilst conch shells are blown loudly outside. They then escort the bride to the house of her husband. A feast is given which lasts for several days. Processions are formed through the streets, and a cocoanut is broken before an image of Ganēsha. These and a few other ceremonies conclude the marriage rites. The most curious custom connected with marriages

amongst these people, however, is in the event of the parties not having the means at the time, to afford the feast, and other expenses. In such an event, they simply tie on the *Mangalasūtram*, upon which the parties live together as man and wife. The other ceremonies, however, must be gone through at sometime or other, when means admits, as it is not considered right that they should be omitted altogether. Should the husband happen to die before the defect has been supplied, the friends and relatives at once borrow money, if they have none by them, and proceed to complete the marriage ceremonies in the presence and on behalf of the corpse. The dead body is placed on a seat with the woman by it, and it is supposed to be the bridegroom. After this gruesome ceremony, the *Mangalasūtram* is taken off the woman, and she is free, as a widow, to remarry.

Amongst the *Kallans*, an important caste in the South, a marriage alliance depends upon consanguinity, much the same as the *Mēnarikam* already spoken of, and it is entirely irrespective of the wishes of either parties to the contract, or even of their parents. When a wedding has been fixed upon, the sister of the bridegroom, with a present in her hand, goes to the house of the parents of the bride, and ties some horse hair round the bride's neck. She then takes her, accompanied by some of her relatives, to the house of the bridegroom, where a feast is prepared. After the feast the pair are conducted to the house of the bridegroom, where a solemn exchange is made of *Vallari Thadis*, or boomerangs. Another feast is then given in the bride's house, and the bride is presented by her parents with some rice and a hen. The bride and bridegroom, now husband and wife, then repair to his home and the marriage ceremony is compete.

There is a caste of cultivators in the South called *Tottiyans*, who perform their weddings as follows. Two booths are erected, outside the limits of the village, and in each of them is placed a bullock-saddle, and upon these are seated the bride and bridegroom, whilst the relatives and friends congregate

around. The attendant priest addresses the assembly after which the price of the bride, usually so much grain, is carried under a canopy of white cloth to the house of the bride's father. This procession, which is heralded by music and dancing, is met by the friends of the bride, who receive the grain, and they all go together into the house. Here betel is distributed and mutual congratulations exchanged, after which the whole party is led to the bride's booth by the priest. Arrived there, the priest receives, at the hand of the bridegroom, a small chain of black beads, and a tiny circlet of gold. The priest then proceeds to tie the chain round the bride's neck and attaches the circlet of gold to her forehead, with which ceremony the marriage is complete. Of course this is succeeded by the usual feasting, without which it does not seem possible for a marriage to take place anywhere.

There are people of a very low status like the *Poleiyans*, for instance, whose marriage ceremony merely consists of a declaration of consent, made by both parties, at a feast to which all the relatives are invited.

The nuptial rites of the hill tribes of Southern India seem to be of the most simple and primitive character, as may be seen by referring to the Nilgiri Manual by the late Mr. Grigg. The following particulars are culled from that volume.

Amongst the *Tōdas*, we are told, early betrothals are common, and the agreement is ratified by an interchange of buffaloes. When the time comes for the marriage to be consummated there is another exchange of buffaloes. There is no ceremony further than the woman bowing down before the man and he placing his foot upon her head. This humiliating acknowledgment of submission on the part of the woman, is not what one would have expected in a tribe where polyandry is practised. The wife is installed in her position by her proceeding to perform some household duties, such as cooking and drawing water.

The *Kōtas*, a tribe on the slopes of the Nilgiris, perform their marriages in the following manner. It is usual for the couple to be betrothed when they are quite young, and when the girl becomes of a

marriageable age she is sent for to the house of her future father-in-law. The usual marriage feast is given, followed by music and dancing, and the ceremony is concluded by the bridegroom's *mother* tying the *Mangalasūtram* round the bride's neck.

Amongst the *Kūrambas,* who are also dwellers on the Nilgiri slopes, there seem to be, properly speaking, no marriage rites whatever. When a couple decide to come together, or even, in some cases, after they have been living together for some time, a feast is given to their friends and the marriage is complete.

With the *Irulas,* also, another Nilgiri tribe, there is no marriage ceremony, neither is there any previous betrothal. When a youth comes of age to choose a wife, he finds one for himself and the matter is ended.

The *Badagas,* who are dwellers on the Nilgiri plateau, are said to be descendants of Canarese colonists. Amongst this people, marriages are contracted without any special rites, and the marriage tie is held by them very loosely. After a couple have agreed to come together, there seems to be a time of probation allowed, during which either of the parties may change their mind, and decline to go on further with the connection. A man may perhaps make several of these temporary alliances before he definitely decides upon a partner for life. There seems to be some feastiug when a definite alliance has been agreed to, and that is all by way of rites and ceremonies.

Nothing has been said in this chapter of the Polyandry and Polygamy which exist as institutions amongst some tribes and nations of India; nor have we touched upon the question of divorce which, though unknown amongst orthodox Hindus, is as freely practised amongst some castes and tribes as it is amongst some of their pale faced brethren of more advanced countries. These are matters somewhat beside the object we have had in hand, which is rather to describe the marriage rites and customs prevalent amongst orthodox Hindus, and those who, though nominally, perhaps, are called Hindus, are really outside the pale of the Brahmanical religion.

# CHAPTER XI.

## HINDU DIET.

## आहार. (Āhāra).

"For the sustenance of the vital spirit, Brahma created all this animal and vegetable system; and all that is moveable and immoveable, that spirit devours." (Manu V. 28.)

In the chapter on *Nitya Karma*—The Hindu Daily Round—a brief description was given of a Brahmin family at dinner, but nothing was said about the composition of the various dishes which usually form the bill of fare. It may therefore not be uninteresting to give a little information on this head, and, at the same time, make a few brief remarks on the dietary of the Hindus generally. There is no doubt that in ancient times far more latitude was allowed, in the matter of food, than is the case in modern days. The institutes of Manu, which are supposed to have been compiled about the fifth century before the Christian era, clearly show that, with various restrictions, most of which commend themselves to one's judgment, there was, practically, as much freedom in the choice of food to the good Hindu of those days as there is to most civilized nations in these modern times. In the fifth chapter of the Institutes, the ancient law-giver mentions various kinds of vegetables and animals that may not lawfully be eaten; but these dietary rules are very much on a line with those laid down for the Jewish nation in the book of Leviticus, and the wisdom of many of them, from a sanitary and economic point of view, is very apparent to the dweller in Eastern lands. One can at once see why, for instance, "mushrooms and all vegetables raised in dung" are excluded from the dietary; and one can also well imagine why, in a hot reeking climate "garlic, onions, and leeks" are not recommended. Again, to the Eastern traveller there is no question as to the positive wisdom of the rule forbidding the eating of the flesh

of birds and beasts of prey, and of such vile feeders as the village hog. Of course some of the restrictions do not so commend themselves to one's ideas of the fitness of things; but doubtless there were good and sensible reasons for most of them, if we only knew. Even, however, in the laws of Manu, the permissions and restrictions are of a somewhat conflicting nature; and, as is the case with so much that is connected with Hinduism, they present, to the eye of the uninitiated, manifest contradictions. Nothing can be more free and general than the passage quoted at the head of this chapter. It seems to cover everything, in its general language; and besides this, there is much of a specific nature of the same free character. We find, for instance, the following general statement:—

"Things fixed are eaten by creatures with locomotion; toothless animals, by animals with teeth; those without hands, by those to whom hands were given; and the timid by the bold." (V. 29.)

After giving utterance to this philosophical observation, embodying a truth evident to the most casual observer of the things of creation, the law-giver goes on to say:—

"He who eats according to law commits no sin, even though every day he tastes the flesh of such animals as may lawfully be tasted; since both animals who may be eaten and those who eat them are created by Brahma."

"No sin is committed by him who, having honoured the deities and the manes, eats flesh-meat which he has bought, or which he has himself acquired, or which has been given him by another." (V. 30, 32.)

In all this there is no more restriction than is the case with ordinary Muhammadan customs, for instance; but, further on, we find enactments which seem entirely to do away with this freedom. A general principle is laid down, and a hard and fast deduction drawn from it as follows:—

"He who injures no animated creature shall attain, without hardship whatever he thinks of, whatever he strives for, whatever he fixes his mind on.

Flesh-meat cannot be procured without injury to animals, and the slaughter of animals obstructs the path to beatitude; from flesh-meat therefore let man abstain." (V. 47, 48.)

On the whole, however, whilst there appears to have been great freedom in the matter in those far off times, even the Institutes themselves show a decided leaning to the merit, if not to the absolute necessity, of abstaining from animal food; and, as is well-known, in course of time, ideas have become so crystallized as to make it an absolute matter of religion to rigorously abstain from the slightest approach to eating anything even containing the germ of animal life. I remember a simple thing that occurred many years ago, soon after my arrival in this country, which very much impressed this upon my mind. A Brahmin visitor, in taking that cursory look round upon things in general, that was, perhaps, in those days, more customary than is the case with our visitors now, was struck with the nice appearance of some salt in the salt-cellar on the table. He had only known salt in its dark dirty appearance, as it is seen exposed for sale in the bazaar. He seemed much interested when told that our table salt was nothing but the ordinary native salt clarified, and he expressed a great desire to know the process. When, however, he was told that the white of egg was an ingredient in the clarifying operation, his countenance fell; nothing so closely allied to animal life as that which had to do with a fowl's egg could enter into the inner man of a twice-born! and so, alas! for the sake of personal ceremonial purity he must be content with his salt in its chemically impure condition. At the present day, all the higher classes abstain from animal food in every form and are rigid vegetarians. The lower classes, as will be seen hereafter, are not so restricted in their diet; indeed, as we go lower down in the scale of caste we find the restrictions lessen, and the dietary scale expand, until it comes to include things considered, by even the least fastidious of Europeans, as altogether abominable.

In a country like India, there is no doubt that a vegetarian diet has much in its favour; indeed, it

is a question whether animal food, particularly in its plain form, is absolutely necessary, even for the health of Europeans, in such a climate. Without, however entering upon what might prove a vexed question, it may, I think, be fairly stated as an opinion widely entertained by those who ought to know, that for natives of the country there is no absolute necessity whatever for animal food. It is largely consumed by the lowest classes, when they can get it, in any shape or form, even the most repulsive, but even in their case, it is a question whether without it they might not equally well endure the physical strain of labour which does not, certainly, fall upon their vegetarian fellow-countrymen; that is, if they could procure the good food of their betters which is denied them by their great poverty. It is, perhaps, hardly possible for the average European to at all understand the loathing and disgust with which a high caste Hindu looks upon the eating of animal food. We know how Englishmen, for instance, abhor the thought of eating the flesh of certain animals which is even relished by natives of some countries; and in England, especially amongst the peasantry, there are strange ideas as to what may be eaten that come as a surprise to those who meet with them for the first time. Some years ago a friend of mine, in Gloucestershire, was very kind to a poor sick cottager. One day she sent, as a delicacy, to the sick woman, a plate of hare from her own table. On asking the invalid afterwards if she had enjoyed the food, my friend was astonished to hear her say she could not possibly eat it, as she could not eat 'varmint'! Added to this state of feeling, in an intensified form, there is, in the case of the Hindu, the religious element, which makes it a crime of the deepest dye, in some cases an unpardonable sin, to partake of such food. Habit, religion, national training which has become an instinct, together with climatic requirements, all point to the wisdom of the vegetarian diet of the Hindu; and anything ought to be looked upon with disfavour which tends to alter the same for what may perhaps be a necessity in colder climes. There are, however, it is said, even

tribes of Brahmins who may eat fish, and we know that many of the manifold divisions of the fourth caste eat fish and mutton, or goat's flesh freely, to say nothing of the Panchamas or outcastes, of whose habits mention will be made later on. There is, however, amongst all classes, the lowest outcastes excepted, the greatest repugnance to eating the flesh of cows or oxen. There is no doubt that what is now a deeply rooted idea was originally a merely economic one, arising out of the exigencies of the people; but in true accordance with Hindu things generally, what first arose as a necessary, custom petrified into a religious law—a law, the wisdom of which it is not difficult to see, and for the breach of which there seems, in this country at least, no necessity. Sir Monier Williams in his book on Hinduism says in a foot-note:—

> "Happily for the Hindus, the cow which supplies them with their only animal food—milk and butter—and the ox which helps to till their ground, were declared sacred at an early period. Had it not been so, this useful animal might have been exterminated in times of famine. What is now a superstition had its origin, like some other superstitions, in a wise fore-thought." (p. 156, Note 1.)

At first sight it may seem to the stranger that the dinner table of the high caste Hindu is dreadfully lacking in variety and quality:—no steaming joints, or any of the infinite variety of roast and boiled, and stewed and fried, that go to make up the daily fare of the well-to-do European. Perhaps one may even be inclined to pity those whose appetite must be appeased with the eternal round of 'curry and rice.' To those, however, who have some intimate knowledge of the daily life of the Hindu gentleman, there seems little room for pity: indeed, the sentiment may rather be in an opposite direction. There is an infinite variety of pickles, and chatneys, and sauces—the sweet, the sour, the bitter, and the pungent—which go to form the chief variety of a by no means to be despised list of appetizers. The preparation

of these is done by the females, who set as much store on their receipts and who take as much personal interest in the actual preparation of them, as did our grandmothers in England before the days of general providers. The secrets of the stillroom enter largely into the education of the Hindu girl, as they did, in the olden days with our own progenitors. When females meet for a chat, the conversation is largely taken up with this all-important subject; and this is but natural, seeing that the good opinion of the master of the household can be influenced by the dinner table as much in India as in other countries. In this we find a touch of nature which shows that all the world's akin.

There are various kinds of *dhāl* and also different modes of preparing it. This dish is a kind of pease-pudding, made of various pulses, and it is used very much, as is the rice, to form the medium for partaking of the different delicacies. We are here speaking of parts of India where rice is the staple food. In other parts, wheat and other kinds of grain are used instead of rice, as the foundation article; and, perhaps, there things may be somewhat different. In a large country like India, with its differing nationalities, it cannot be expected that the dietary system will be the same throughout; but it may be said that in most parts, these sauces and pickles form a large element in the food of the people. Of course vegetables, of many kinds, including the numerous gourds, go largely to form the 'curry'; and above all and without which everything else is as nothing, there is the never-to-be-too-highly prized 'ghee' or clarified butter. This universally valued article enters, more or less, into the preparation of almost every dish; and is, of course, employed more or less freely according to the means of the family. It is also used, when it can be had, for pouring over the rice by the diner at his discretion. This may not seem very nice to the uninitiated, but to those who have given it a good trial it is most appetizing. After the meal, and somewhat as we take pudding or sweets, curds are taken, poured over the rice, and eaten with suitable

pickles or chatneys. This dish is always the last one of the meal, and when cakes are eaten, of which there are a great variety, it is done just before the dish of curds is introduced. In the preparation of these cakes and sweets of many kinds, the females, very much like the European housewife, pride themselves on their proficiency; and at festive seasons such things are largely in request. It will thus be seen that Hindu diet is by no means lacking in variety, or quality, to whet the appetite or to form a good substantial meal. Our Aryan cousins may not, perhaps, have the stalwart frame of the European, but the well-formed limbs and well-nourished body of the average Hindu gentleman show that the Hindu dietary, albeit wanting in what we may consider substantial dishes, is well suited for all those purposes for which food is a necessity. The Hindu law-giver, having in view the proneness of man's animal nature to over-indulgence, and also, perhaps, being personally acquainted with the highly spiced, appetizing dishes of the East, is careful to warn against evils, that might result from a conjunction of these temptations. He says:—

> "Excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame, and to future bliss in heaven; it is injurious to virtue and odious among men; he must for these reasons, by all means avoid it." (Manu II. 57.)

What has been said hitherto applies, in the first place, to the higher castes and well-to-do Hindus; but, with a few changes, this description applies to all respectable classes. The chief difference lies in the number and variety of the pickles and chatneys, &c., and the manner in which they are prepared: and also in the fact, as before stated, that the Sūdras partake of animal food. Even by these, however, particularly in the villages, animal food is not regularly eaten; the main reason being, perhaps, as far as country folks are concerned, that it is not often procurable. There are no butchers' shops in the villages, and it is only occasionally, as at some festive season, that a sheep or goat is slaughtered for food.

Fish, however, is more used, when procurable. Fowls and eggs are eaten oftener than 'butcher's meat'; but even this is chiefly at the entertainment of friends or visitors, and on such like occasions. It may also be mentioned that the Brahmins are noted for their good cooking; and this, as a rule, is done by the females of the household—not servants. On important festive occasions, as at marriage feasts, when the labour involved may be too heavy for the regular household, male cooks, friends or relatives, give their help; or even professional cooks are employed—care always being taken that the rules of caste are not infringed. Of course, in all cases, the number, variety, and quality of the dishes must depend very largely upon the means of the household; but this is a fact that goes without saying. It may also be mentioned that fruit is sometimes taken, after meals, as a kind of dessert; but this is not so commonly done as might be supposed. Betel (*tāmbūlam*) is, however, commonly taken, after every meal, as a digester.

In the matter of beverage, it may broadly be stated that true Hindus are water drinkers. Milk and buttermilk are also freely drunk when procurable, especially buttermilk in the hot season. A simple drink is also made of water, sweetened with jaggery (sugar in its unrefined state) and flavoured with pepper; but this is more of a sacred drink and is not ordinarily used. The Panchamas or outcastes, and also some of the lower of the numerous classes of Sudras, do largely drink intoxicants, chiefly toddy and country arrack. Amongst respectable Hindus, however, the drinking of intoxicants of any kind is considered most degrading; and although there are a few—comparatively very few—and these chiefly the so called enlightened! dwellers in towns and other larger centres, who are becoming addicted to drinking habits, it may still be said, as a broad fact, that real Hindus are a nation of water drinkers. This fact is one that should be noted by the advocates of temperance and it would, perhaps, as an argument, have more effect than many of those used by orators who are endowed with more zeal than discretion. Here is

a nation composed of men who have proved themselves capable of enduring enormous physical fatigue, as clever, hard-working mechanics and laborious cultivators of the soil, and numbers of whom rank in the first class as learned pundits, brave warriors, and clever statesmen, and yet who for ages have been a nation of water drinkers; and this also in a climate that is certainly conducive to thirst, a fact often used as an excuse for indulging in stimulating alcoholic beverages.

The higher classes of Hindus generally have but two meals a day—the midday meal, which may be taken earlier if circumstances necessitate it, as in the case of business men and officials who have to go to office, and the evening meal, or supper. The supper is usually taken very late in the evening, shortly before retiring for the night. This practice, which might be productive of uncomfortable nights to Europeans, with their heavier and more indigestible diet, does not seem to interfere with the rest of the Hindus; probably on account of the lighter quality of the food, as distinct from the quantity taken. A good orthodox Hindu should take no food or drink of any kind before the midday meal; but, as a matter of fact, it is getting a custom, where circumstances may seem to call for it, for a light breakfast, perhaps coffee and certain kinds of cakes, to be taken, earlier in the day. This is not, perhaps, strictly speaking, in accordance with the Shāstras, but it is nevertheless a custom that has arisen and which is tolerated. With the Sudras, however, and the Panchamas, it is an invariable rule to have a light breakfast in the early morning, when poverty does not prevent it. This meal usually consists of cold rice which has been purposely left over from the supper of the previous evening. It is eaten just as it is, simply flavoured, perhaps, by a little salt; but when it can be had, a morsel of broiled salt fish, or a broiled chilly, or an onion, or bit of cocoanut, may be taken by way of relish. This cold rice is mixed up with a little buttermilk, or the cold *congee* of the night before, that is, the water in which the rice has been boiled, and

which forms a kind of thin gruel. This custom is a very wise one, as can easily be seen, in the case of those who have to rise early and do a hard morning's work in the fields before the midday meal; whilst the fasting until midday is not so detrimental to those, who, like the Brahmins, perform little manual labour, or suffer little from exposure.

When on a journey, or otherwise away from home, the high caste Hindu has to undergo many inconveniences, and must often suffer much from the pangs of hunger; but even travellers have various ways and means of obtaining food. Hospitality is universal, and the traveller is always sure of ungrudging entertainment from those of his own caste, whose hospitality he may lawfully accept. This duty of entertaining guests is laid down by the ancient lawgiver Manu, as of prime importance. In treating of the duties and obligations of house-keepers he says:—

> "No guest must be dismissed in the evening by the housekeeper; he is sent by the retiring sun; and whether he come in fit season or unseasonably, he must not sojourn in the house without entertainment.
>
> Let not himself eat any delicate food, without asking his guest to partake of it; the satisfaction of a guest will assuredly bring the house-keeper wealth, reputation, long life, and a place in heaven." (iii. 105, 106.)

Connected with many of the *choultries*, or public lodging places, are, also, means for providing meals for travellers of different castes; and towns and most large villages have as well, houses of entertainment for different classes where food is given on payment, which is usually at so much per meal. There are also certain kinds of food that may be taken without undergoing the usual ceremonies. A broad division is made of things cooked in water, and those cooked dry, or with ghee or oil. "It is the water that makes the mischief," as a Brahmin friend said to me when taking on the subject. Sweetmeats, and certain kinds of cakes, and parched grain and rice broiled and cooked in ghee, these and fruit may be eaten at any

time and in company with other castes, without changing the dress, or bathing, or undergoing any other of the various ceremonies that have been already described in these pages. Thus is the wind tempered to the shorn lamb, and a loophole left for escape from a difficulty that must otherwise often prove intolerable.

A somewhat detailed description has already been given, in the chapter on *Nityakarma*, as to the etiquette of the dinner table amongst the respectable classes; and reference can be made there by any one wishing to recall to mind the many and varied ceremonies that must be performed on these occasions, —ceremonies and customs which have been handed down by generations untold; and which are, to a large extent, as rigidly followed at this day as they were in the long past ages of antiquity. In this chapter, however, the intention has been rather to give some description of the food partaken of than the mode of partaking of it.

It remains now but to make a few remarks on the food of the lowest classes, the outcastes, who are not troubled by any of the dietary rules which are so rigid in the case of their betters. It has been shown that members of the Sudra caste partake of animal food. Indeed, some of the lowest classes of that infinitely divided and sub-divided caste eat almost anything and everything that comes in their way. The *Yerukalas*, for instance, a kind of gipsy tribe, who live by making wicker baskets and the like, will eat rats, and cats, and the village pig, and almost anything they can get; and yet, strange to say, these and the like, are not looked upon as unclean in the same way as the Panchamas. They are even allowed to draw water from the caste wells, a privilege that is denied the outcaste, who must not even go near or look into a well that is used by caste people. The broad line of division that marks off the despised and hated Panchamas (Pariahs and Chucklers) from others, is the fact that they eat carrion. Others may eat animal food, and yet not be prevented from using caste wells, because they do not eat it in a state of carrion; but the very touch of these is pollution. The carcases and skins of all the cattle

and other animals that die of disease or old age are the perquisite of the Panchamas, who consume the flesh and tan the skins into leather, or otherwise dispose of them. Anything more disgusting than this practice it is impossible to conceive; and it is small wonder that those who indulge in it are hated and despised as unclean. The hamlets of these people are surrounded with bones and other signs of this habit; and one may often see the carcase of some buffalo or bullock that has died, perhaps, of disease, or worn out with extreme old age, lying in some wet ditch, or otherwise awaiting the usual disgusting operation. Anything more revolting it is impossible to imagine than a group of these people squatting round some such object, watching the skinning and cutting up process and waiting for the dividing of the sickening flesh. The picture is generally rendered all the more horrible by the sight of crows and vultures and village dogs waiting for their turn at the remains, and by the suspicion of the neighbouring bushes sheltering a jackal or two, drawn thither by the hope of a congenial repast. True, the lot of these people is hard; they often suffer from hunger and are glad to get anything to satisfy their appetite; but such feeding seems to bring them down to the level of the birds and beasts of prey; and it must tend to brutalize and degrade. It may be said that these despised people have, as a rule, extreme poverty as some excuse for this custom; and perhaps, to their way of thinking, such food is a welcome addition to the miserable meals of pulses or rice, eked out with a few chillies or other cheap condiments, with, perhaps, now and then a morsel of half putrid dried fish, by way of relish. Amongst the very poor also even such meals as these are by no means always plentiful and regular; often but once a day can the pangs of hunger be appeased. Perhaps it would not be wrong to say that a large number are in a chronic state of hunger. These things cause it to be a kind of festive time to many when a carcase falls to their share; and they cannot understand our abhorrence of such habits. Such also is the power of custom

that many of these classes who have risen by hard work and thrift, and are able to afford better food, still indulge in these horrid feasts, when opportunity occurs. The missionaries have wisely made it a hard and fast rule amongst their converts that the eating of dead cattle shall be absolutely given up; and it has become a distinction between Christians and heathen of these classes, that the former do not indulge in this debasing habit. In this way, also, has Christianity an elevating influence, raising men and women from habits disgusting and degrading, and placing them on a higher level of manhood.

It may be asked why Englishmen should not be allowed to use caste wells, when flesh-eating Hindus and Muhammadans are allowed this privilege. The answer is that, though they do not eat carrion themselves, they employ servants of the class who do, and also have their food cooked by them. When the Muhammadans came to India they were wise enough only to employ caste men as servants and cooks, hence they themselves have always been treated as caste people. The English, on the contrary, from the first, employed Pariah servants, and hence they, too, are treated as outcaste; food cooked by such men being of itself unclean and defiling. One cannot but look back with regret and wish it had been otherwise. There may have been reasons why the first English settlers did not follow the example of the Muhammadans in this matter; perhaps necessity compelled them to adopt the course they did; or it may have been merely a result of that cynical indifference to the fancies and superstitions of others which is but too often a characteristic of the average Englishman. Any way it would certainly have been a great gain if the English had been regarded as caste men, in the same way as are the Muhammadans, seeing that those of the natives who embraced their religion would possibly be elevated to the same privilege, as is the case with the followers of Islam, even to the present day. It is not, for a moment, that we would encourage caste, as such, or wish for anything approaching to so dire a system amongst Christians, but we do

think it a most lamentable thing, whatever may have given rise to it, that although a Muhammadan may, for instance, draw water from any well and in various other respects is treated as on an equal footing, socially, with respectable Hindus, an Englishman is not allowed the same privilege. The lowest Panchama, also, on becoming a convert to Islam, is, by the very fact, at once allowed all the privileges of his co-religionists. Not only, however, is the Englishman treated as on the same religious level as the Panchama, but in the event of a high caste Brahmin becoming a Christian, even though he may not depart one whit from his former habits, as regards diet, he, by the very fact of his change of religion, is made at once to descend to the lowest level, in the estimation of his countrymen, and is treated as an outcaste. These remarks may, at first sight, seem out of place here; but seeing, that, after all, the question hangs very largely upon food, and what goes into a man, it may not, really, be so alien a consideration with which to conclude these somewhat discursive remarks on Hindu diet.

In going over this subject it is impossible not to have been struck with the difference, in this respect, between Hinduism, with its rigid rules and regulations, and the religion of Christ, with its broad holy freedom, and yet, withal, its care for the weakness of others. The Prophet of Nazareth, in contradistinction to the laws of Manu, teaches :—

"Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." (Matt. xv. 11, 18.)

And St. Paul, whilst upholding the broad freedom of the laws of his Master, also, in the same spirit of charity and carefulness for others which Christ so eminently taught and practised, is careful to admonish that this same freedom is not to be employed to domineeringly override all the prejudices and weak-

nesses of others but rather to be used for others good :—

"I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."

"All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any-thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest, I make my brother to offend."

(Rom. xiv. 14, 15, 20, 21; 1 Cor. viii. 13.)

# CHAPTER XII.

## HINDU FESTIVALS.

### पर्वाणि. (Parvāni.)

The birthdays of the gods, and the coronation days of the Manus (legislators and saints), must be punctually observed, with worship and fastings. By this purity of mind and happiness will accrue, and sin will, to a large extent, be destroyed. (*Dharma pannam.*)

As far back as history or tradition takes us, we find that communities were accustomed to set apart periodically recurring days and seasons, to be commemorative of events of national, or racial importance. These seasons were usually marked by more or less complete rest from all ordinary labour, and they seem, from the very earliest times, to have been observed with religious solemnities. In the absence of written history, great events would be best kept in remembrance by such constantly recurring observances, the character of which would be joyous or mournful in correspondence with the events commemorated. Outside the history of other ancient nations, the written annals of the Jewish nation afford us abundantly sufficient examples of these festive occasions, and the kind of events they were instituted to keep in remembrance. Christianity, too, is not without its solemn seasons, which serve to emphasize those events of most conspicuous importance in connection with our Holy Faith.

It does not need a very lengthened residence in India to find out how particularly devoted are its people to keeping up the numerous, and varied festivals, prescribed by custom or religion. It sometimes requires a large exercise of that quality for which the Englishman, in India at least, is not conspicuous, to quietly submit to the inconveniences to which one is, at times, put by demands for leave of absence to celebrate this or that feast. And yet, if

one will only calmly think of it, these festivals are not without their bright side. They are periods of rest and enjoyment in the lives of many who have not over much brightness in their existence; and in this respect, at least, they serve one of the purposes for which it pleased the Almighty to appoint the Sabbath. It is pleasant to think of the dull plodding round of toil being broken, now and then, in the life of our Hindu brethren, by a little rest and enjoyment; albeit one could wish that the events commemorated were often other than they are, both in origin, and in manner of commemoration.

Allusion has been made to the general ignorance of the Englishman in India of things connected with the daily life of the Hindu, and of much that is constantly taking place before his very eyes. The same observation might be made, too, as regards these festive seasons. Ask an ordinary Englishman what is the meaning of any particular Hindu feast that may be in course of observance, why it is kept up, and why in such and such a particular form; and in nine cases out of ten the answer will convey very little information, and that even by those long resident in the country. Indeed the natives themselves are often unable to give a very clear answer to such questions, even when they join in the observances. It is intended, in this and the following chapters, to throw some little light on this subject, though, owing to the variations occasioned by difference of caste and sect, the task is not at all an easy one. The information conveyed can at best be but fragmentary, and may not answer in detail for every part of the country.

As may be seen in the Native Almanac, there are some 125 festivals, of greater or less importance, marked for observance during the current year. Some of these have to do with all classes of Hindus as *Samvatsarādi* (New Year's day), and some with certain classes only, as *Sivarātri* (the birth night of Siva), which, as the name itself indicates, is not observed by the worshippers of Vishnu. Some of them, again, are only observed by men, as *Krishna-*

*jayanti* (the birth day of Krishna); whilst others are observed only by women, as *Varalakshmivratam* (the festival of Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu). According to the *Purānas*, there are some 400 festivals to be observed throughout the year, but most of these have fallen into disuse.

According to the Hindu Almanacs it may be said that, as a rule, the festivals are fixed as to date; but since the Hindu and the European Almanacs are drawn up on different systems, the festivals do not occur upon fixed dates according to our reckoning. Indeed, the Hindu Almanacs themselves differ in their systems, the Telugu being lunar, for instance, whilst the Tamil is solar.

It would be a hopeless task to attempt a description of all the Hindu festivals; indeed it would far exceed our limits to enter upon anything like a mere allusion, even, to all those marked to be observed in the native Almanac. It may be well, therefore, merely to take a dozen of the chief regular feasts and try to give some idea of their origin, and the mode in which they are observed.

It must be understood that what is here described is chiefly as things are in the Circars. With reference, however, to these chief festivals, it may almost be taken for granted that, whilst details may vary in different parts, the main principles are very much the same all over the country. The festivals will be given in the order in which they occur during the year, and no attempt will be made to give them in the order of relative importance.

(1) SANKRĀNTI, or the commencement of the sun's northern course in the heavens. This occurs in the month *Pushya* (December—January) or about the middle of January, according to our reckoning, some time after the 10th. It is observed by all classes, and lasts for three days. This feast is called *Pongal* in the South, and is the commencement of the Tamil year. It is a special period of universal rejoicing, being a kind of harvest festival. All work is stopped, and even the passenger boats on the canals do not ply, particularly on the first two days; the cattle are

specially made much of and given a rest, as well as being supplied with extra food. There is also a good deal of cock-fighting — a pastime to which many of the middle and lower classes are particularly addicted. Alms are also freely distributed, and presents given to dependants; it is also one of the three great festivals when it is the custom to put on new clothes —the other two being the *Dasara* and *Samvatsarādi.* During this season also it is customary for a wife, together with her husband, to visit her own people, when they are feasted, and have presents of new clothes, and perhaps jewels given to them.

Of the three days during which the festival lasts the first is called *Bhōgi* (rejoicing) and is a kind of eve to the festival proper. On this day oil baths are universally taken. This does not mean that a bath is taken in a tub of oil, but a very favourite kind of bath, in which rubbing the body with oil forms a conspicuous part. The houses are cleaned and decorated, and a particular dish is partaken of made of new rice and *dhāl* cooked together in milk. The name Pongal for this feast is said to have arisen from this custom. If the pot boils well it is thought to be a good omen; therefore when friends meet they ask each other. 'Has it boiled (Pongal)?' hence the name Pongal. On this and the next day also, those classes who usually consume animal food, scrupulously abstain from it. The second day is the chief one, when there is special worship and the gods are carried in procession, with much beating of drums, and blaring of trumpets, and other barbarous accompaniments of such processions. The third day is devoted to very much the same kind of things as the second.

(2) Maha Sivaratri, or the great night of Siva. Every month has a Sivarātri (*Māsa Sivarātri*—monthly Siva's night) on the eve of the new moon, when worshippers of Siva fast all day and perform special rites to their god. This annual festival, however, is called the great (*Mahā*) night of Siva; and it is held on the eve of the new moon in *Magha* (January—February), and commemorates the birth of Siva. The festival lasts one day, and is observed by all classes

except those who strictly adhere to the worship of Vishnu. The whole day is kept as a strict fast until midnight, and the *Lingam* (the emblem of Siva), is particularly worshipped. Pilgrimages are also made to certain rivers, and to temples of Siva that may be particularly sacred.

It may be interesting to describe what is done on these occasions. On arriving at the place of pilgrimage, the devout will bathe in the adjacent river or tank and then proceed to the temple and perform what is called *pradakshinam.* This consists of solemnly walking round the temple a greater or less number of times, according to the devoutness of the worshippers; the hands are held together in the attitude of prayer (*namaskāram*), the right shoulder being towards the temple. During this circumambulation the worshippers confess their sins and ask for pardon by repeating various verses (*slōkams*). These verses, or prayers, are quotations from the *Purānas,* and so Sūdras as well as Brahmins are allowed to repeat them. Of course many repeat them like parrots without knowing the meaning of the words at all, whilst some cannot even do this. In this latter case, a small fee will procure the assistance of an attendant priest, who will walk round with the worshippers repeating the verses, the poor illiterate people joining in here and there according to their ability. The following are specimens of the verses thus repeated :—

यानि कानि च पापानि
जन्मांतरकृतानि च ।
तानि तानि प्रणश्यंति
प्रदक्षिणपदेपदे ॥

Whatever sins (I may have committed)
In my former births.
Those very sins are destroyed
By each circumambulation.

पापोहं पापकर्माहं
पापात्मा पापसंभवः ।
त्राहि मां कृपया देव
शरणागतवत्सल ॥

I am a sinner; a man of sinful deeds,
I am of a corrupt mind; a man born in sin.
Save me of thy mercy O God!
Thou that art merciful to those that flee to thee for refuge.

अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति
त्वमेव शरणं मम ।
तस्मात्कारुण्यभावेन
रक्षरक्ष महेश्वर ॥

I have no other refuge;
Thou alone at my refuge;
Therefore of thy mercy
O Siva! save me, save me.

After the worshippers have performed as many circumambulations as they think fit, they go into the temple and present offerings of such things as fruit, flowers, and camphor, according to their ability, giving at the same time an offering of money. The officiating priest takes the offering and waves it before the Lingam, with burning incense, repeating various *slōkams.* A part of the offering is then returned to the worshipper, and a part retained by the priest; in the case, for instance, of a cocoanut, it is broken into two halves by the priest, and a portion is returned whilst a portion retained. The water in the cocoanut is collected in a vessel and poured over the Lingam. The worshippers then stoop to receive the priestly blessing, which is given in the following manner:—The priest takes a bell-shaped kind of vessel, usually

made of brass or copper (*Rudrapādam*—the foot of Siva), and placing it on the head of each worshipper, repeats the following prayer, the priest repeating it as the representative of the worshipper :—

हिरण्यगर्भादिसुरासुराणां
किरीटमाणिक्यविराजिमंडितं ।
शिवस्यसत्पादसरोजयुग्मं
मदीयमूर्धानमलंकरिष्यति ॥

O Siva! bless my head with thy feet,
Which are like unto the lotus,
Adorned with jewels from the crowns of
Brahma, and other gods and demi-gods.

After this, those who have thus been blessed, turn to the stone bull (*Nandi*—the vehicle of Siva) which is in each Siva temple, and repeat several times into its ear the word *Hara ! Hara !* (O destroyer !). This is one of the names of Siva, and here means destroyer of sin. After this the worshippers are at liberty to go away. The same ceremony is, in some cases, repeated in the evening. In the meantime, the people join in the various festivities of the fair, and in the case of those who may, from age or ill-health, be unable to keep a longer fast, food is taken. After the people have all finished their worship, the attendant priests and Pandits (learned Brahmins) proceed to bathe the Lingam with milk and water, and cocoanut water, and sometimes with oil, repeating the while various *mantrams* (verses from the Vēdas). After the bath, the idol is clothed and is adorned with the sacred thread (*yagnōpavitam*), and sacred marks (*pundrams*), of which accounts have been given in former chapters. The image is then worshipped by the repetition of the thousand names of Siva, a certain leaf and a flower being dropped over the image at each name. Usually the leaves of the Bael tree (*Ægle Marmelos*) or those of the sacred Basil (*Ocymum Sanctum*), and jasmine

or else marigold flowers are employed. Then incense is burned, while Mantrams are repeated, and camphor is lit and waved before the image. Food is then placed before it, such as curry and rice, and fruit, and milk and curds, and such like things; this is placed and then removed to be consumed by the priests. The food is followed by *pansupāri* (betel) as is the usual native custom after meals. This is followed by more waving of burning camphor, and the performance of various other acts of worship, such as the placing of flowers and the repetition of Mantrams.

This concludes the worship proper. The Pandits and other Brahmins who may be present—women also being admitted,—then stand and in a loud voice repeat praises to Siva. The *Rudrapādam* blessing is then given as before, and the assembly disperses. Some of the flowers and leaves are usually given to the men and women worshippers, who adorn themselves with them. It is usually very late by this time, and the devout may then go and break their fast, the first time since the preceding evening!

This has been described somewhat at length, because it represents the usual mode of worship on such occasions—Hindu temple divine worship on special occasions. Every day some worship is gone through on a small scale, and every month, at the *Māsa Sivarātri,* more than ordinary is performed; but the full ritual, as thus briefly described, is only employed at the annual festival of *Sivarātri,* when large numbers come from surrounding places to the particularly sacred temples. Indeed the movement of population is so great during the Mahā Sivarātri festival, that care has to be taken in arranging census operations, that neither the preliminary nor the final enumeration occurs about that time.

(3) Holi is a festival that is held in honour of the god *Manmadha* or *Kāma* (the Hindu Cupid). It is observed in the month of *Phālguna* (February—March), and lasts for about fifteen days, of which the last three are the most important. This may be called the festival of the god of lust; and the parading of dancing girls, and the singing of lewd songs form some

of the items in it. The mere mention of these facts gives an indication of the whole tone of the thing; and indeed the very word Kāma is used to describe lust and lechery of every kind. The time is observed as a kind of carnival; the crowds play practical jokes and throw coloured powder over each other, and coloured water is squirted over those within reach. There is no temple worship connected with this festival, as there are no temples to this god. Siva is supposed to have slain this deity by a glance of his third eye (that in the centre of the forehead), and in commemoration of this, the festival ends with a bonfire, in which is burned an image of the god Kāma. This burning, is done at midnight, and is accompanied by all sorts of frolic and horse-play, and rubbing on the body of the ashes of the fire. Altogether it is a disgraceful time, and staid sober-minded people do not join in it at all. It is not observed very much in the Circars, though in some parts of the country it is said to be very popular; and it is more or less popular all over India.

(4) Srirāmajayanti or Sri Rāmanavami (the ninth day of Rāma, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu), a feast observed in honour of the birth of Rāma, which is said to have taken place on the 9th day of the first half of the month *Chaitra* (March—April), and which lasts for one day. This festival is observed by all classes, except the wearers of the Lingam, who are strict Saivites. On this day the *Rāmāyana* (the sacred epic poem of the Hindus, recording the adventures of Rāma) is particularly read in private houses and in the temples. In the bazaars also, and in public places, Pandits read and explain this favourite poem to surrounding crowds. Even in small villages some one will be found, if possible, capable of reading aloud the sacred text, as much merit is supposed to be derived even from the hearing of it. It is said that whoever studies this book is thereby liberated from all his sins and is exalted to the highest heaven.

There is an image of Rāma in almost every village, whilst there is a greater or less number in the towns, according to their size—for there is no god in India

so universally worshipped as this. The image is adorned and taken in procession through the streets on this day, to the accompaniment of music and the singing of hymns in praise of that god. One great feature of the festival is a pilgrimage, by those who are able, to some celebrated temple of Rāma. Of such temples there appear to be very few. There is a famous one at Bhadrachalam on the Upper Godavari, which is a very celebrated place of pilgrimage, and great numbers come, some from very long distances, to be present during the festival at this temple. Crowds may be seen painfully wending their way along the roads; some who can afford it, riding in the bullock cart of the country, whilst the majority trudge it on foot, carrying their bundle of rice or other food on their heads. Every now and then a group of these pilgrims, as they journey on, will set up a shout of *Gōvindā ! Gōvindā !* (a name of Vishnu), which has a strange effect, especially when heard for the first time. Of course in these days advantage is taken of the railway by those who can afford its comfort; but still there must always be much inconvenience and suffering attending these pilgrimages, especially in the case of older people and delicate females and children. The time of setting forth depends upon the distance to be travelled, and it is necessary for the pilgrims to arrive at the temple before the day of the festival. The details of the temple worship on this occasion are very much like those already described under *Mahā Sivarātri*; only, of course, in a case of this kind, everything would be upon a very large scale. At Bhadrachalam, large quantities of food are distributed to the poorer pilgrims, both from the temple stores and also by wealthy pilgrims, who thus acquire much merit (*punyam*). Sometimes an epidemic, like cholera, will break out at these annual gatherings, when numbers die, and the disease is also carried far and wide by the returning pilgrims. But much merit is gained from the pilgrimage and from seeing the face of the god; and hence, even in these enlightened days, sanitary considerations are made to give way to superstition.

(5) Nāgasaviti, a festival in honour of the Nāgas. This occurs on the 4th day of the first part of the month *Kārtika* (October—November). The Nāgas are a race of serpents supposed to be half human—the head and body, to the waist, being human and the rest serpent; and they are said to inhabit the regions under the earth (*nāgalokum*). This race of demi-gods is supposed to be malevolent, and therefore much of the worship is for the purpose of deprecating their wrath. The Nāgasaviti festival is observed by all classes and lasts for one day. In these days the real object sought by the masses is to be preserved from being bitten by snakes; but there is also some idea of these monsters being able to cure certain diseases, chiefly those of the skin.

The chief object of worship on this day is the cobra, which is considered to be the chief of the snakes. The worship is mainly done by the women, and the process is somewhat as follows. The females, accompanied by a family priest (*purōhita*) if possible, go to the nearest white ant heap—which is a favourite abode of the cobra—taking with them milk and flowers, and a dish prepared with ground rice, jaggery, and camphor, called in Telugu *chalimidi*. The worshippers, having previously bathed, and with their hair hanging down, perform a kind of service at the ant-hill, by repeating the name of the god and the like, pouring milk down the hole, and scattering flowers over the hillock. If a Purōhita is present, he repeats the form called *Sankalpam*, which as has been before explained, consists chiefly of mentioning the names of the place, day, month, and year and the names of the worshippers. The above mentioned dish is then offered by the waving of the hand from it towards the supposed abode of the snake, certain words being repeated the while. The worship is concluded by placing burning incense by the hole, and the women, who are perhaps accompanied by their children, boys and girls, then return home, where the Chalimidi together with water sweetened with jaggery (a coarse sugar) is partaken of as a festive meal. This serpent worship is universal throughout India.

Of course there is a certain amount of danger necessarily incurred in thus trifling with such deadly creatures; and I remember, many years ago, when in the town of Ellore, in the Godavari District, hearing of a poor woman who met her death through engaging in this method of worship. She was pouring milk down a snake hole, when a cobra darted out and bit her so that she died.

A very characteristic story was told me recently by a doctor of the Indian Medical Service, that may serve to illustrate native ideas on such subjects. Some time ago a Brahmin was taken to the hospital of my friend, in a complete state of collapse, from the supposed effects of cobra bite. Under treatment he soon revived, and within a few hours was permitted to go home. A few days after he paid a visit to the doctor, doubtless, as the latter perhaps thought, to express his gratitude, may be in some substantial manner, for he appears to have been fairly well-to-do. Instead of acting in this way, however, the ungrateful fellow coolly demanded a large present—a hundred rupees or so, if I remember rightly, by way of compensation, for, said he, "I did not ask you to interfere with me and bring me back to life. I should certainly have died if you had not interfered, and as it was the sacred cobra that had bitten me, I should as certainly have gone to heaven, whilst now I may, by my sins, miss that state after all." This story is given as it was narrated and for what it is worth, but most probably the Brahmin was exercising his native cunning for the sake of what he might get, seeing that death from snake-bite, even from the bite of the sacred cobra, is generally considered to be on a par with death by fire, or drowning, or suicide, which are thought to be cursed deaths, and the result of grievous sin in a previous life. It is perhaps only in India, however, that such a story could be possible.

(6) KRISHNAJAYANTI, or the birth day of Krishna. This event is commemorated in Southern India on the 8th day of the dark half of the month *Srāvana* (August—September). Krishna is said to have been born during the night of the 8th. It is observed

by all classes except the Lingaits, and the festival lasts for two days.

This is one of the most popular of the annual festivals, and is a time of fun and rejoicing. The usual temple festival worship is performed, but generally not on a very large scale, and there are no pilgrimages to shrines. As is the case with the *Rāmāyanam* at *Srirāmajayanti*, so at this festival, the *Bhāgavatam* is read. This is a celebrated Hindu poem describing the life of Krishna. During the birth night much worship is performed to this god in the temples and also in private houses. The Bhāgavatam is read and hymns are sung in praise of the god, to the accompaniment of music and cymbals and drums, and some sections of the Hindus fast from the evening of the seventh to the morning of the ninth. The real fun is on the ninth. On this day there are the usual processions of the images accompanied by dancing girls and the singing of hymns to the praise of Krishna, and repetitions of Mantrams by attendant Pandits. Much amusement is afforded by things got up in memory of Krishna stealing the curds and butter. Two upright poles are fixed in the earth in public places, usually across the street, and a cross pole is attached to the top which is adorned with leaves, and flowers and banners. A pulley is attached to the centre of this cross bar, through which a string is rove, suspending an earthen pot containing milk and a few coins; and the pot is covered over with a cocoanut. A person holds the other end of the string and pulls the pot up and down. Youths, usually of the *golla* or milkmen caste—Krishna was reared in a *golla* house—leap and try to touch the pot, which is dexterously jerked out of reach by the person holding the string. Whoever succeeds in touching the pot gets its contents as a prize. All this affords much fun, and the competitors are drenched with coloured water (*vasantam*), which is squirted or thrown over them by the revellers as they leap about. Greasy poles are also set up, or posts smeared with tar: the contents of a pot fixed at the top being the prize of the successful climber. Alto-

gether it is a day of fun and rejoicing which, however, is all of a very innocent nature compared with the abominations of the Holi festival.

(7) VINAYAKACHATURTHI or the birth day of Vināyaka or Ganēsa. This deity is said to have been the son of Siva and Durgā or Kāli. He is supposed to ward off obstacles and difficulties, and is therefore worshipped at the commencement of all important undertakings to avert the interference of evil demons. The worship of Ganēsa is very popular, hence this festivals is observed by all classes, except strict Vaishnavas. His image is that of a man's body with an elephant's head, and a very protuberant stomach to denote his gluttony. The feast is held on the fourth day of the light half of the month *Bhadrapada* (August—September) and is observed for one day. There is no particular worship in the temples, nor are there any processions, all the worship being done in private houses. In that portion of the house where worship is wont to be performed, a small clay platform is erected and adorned with a powder made of ground rice mixed with colouring matter; and upon this is placed a clay image of Ganēsa. These images are made by the potters in immense numbers at this season, as each house, however poor, must have one. They are simply clay stuck off in a mould, and cost about one pie (about half a farthing) each. When the image is placed on the platform, several lights composed of wick in cow-ghee, are placed before it, and a Mantram of consecration is said (*pratishta*), upon which the spirit of the god is said to enter into it. Worship is performed to this image by repeating certain prayers and after that dropping upon it, one by one, twenty-one different kinds of certain leaves and the same number of certain flowers; during this operation the thousand names of the god are repeated. Food is also placed before the image, especially a kind of hard balls made of ground rice with pounded

Bengal gram and cocoanut (*undrāllu*). Of the prayers that are said the following is a specimen :—

शुक्लांबरधरं विष्णुं
शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजं ।
प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत
सर्वविघ्नोपशांतये ॥

Meditate upon the white robed omnipresent one,
In colour like unto the moon, and having four arms,
The Elephant-faced one (Ganēsh),
For the removal of all obstacles.

This worship takes place about mid-day and is repeated in the evening after sunset, up to which time, the lights must be kept burning before the image. Cow-ghee is a comparatively expensive thing, but it is necessary, and however poor the people may be, they will have, at least, one small light burning. If in a house there are only one or two people, and they very poor, they will join with others for this worship.

It is at this feast that the artisans worship their tools and the students their books, which is done by placing them before the image, and, when the worship is finished, sprinkling them with rice which has been coloured red, and with sandalwood paste, the ceremony being concluded by circumambulating the whole, repeating prayers (*pradakshinam*). Some of the flowers and leaves which have been used in the worship are taken by the worshippers to adorn their own person. On the third day, the little image is taken and thrown into running water, as a river or stream, or into a well or tank; anywhere where it cannot be trodden upon or otherwise defiled. The same is done with the flowers and leaves that have been used in the worship.

The rowdy element of the people have much fun during the darkness of the night, throwing stones on houses, or putting down thorny seeds in front of

houses, which when trodden upon by the bare foot, pierce it and cause pain. The idea is that the blame and curses evoked by this will be turned into blessings upon the perpetrators of the mischief!

There is one important part of this feast that must not be forgotten. It is customary, sometime during the evening before dark, for groups of people to assemble in a neighbour's house to hear narrated a certain story called *Samantakam*. In this story it is related how the sun, being pleased with a certain king named Satrajitt, took from his own necklace and gave to him a mythological jewel called Samantakam. It is supposed that those who do not hear this story before seeing the moon, will run the risk of having some false charge or other made against them, or in some way be subject to slander or calumny. This is a curious idea, but it seems to be a very universal one. Its origin seems to be a story which is briefly as follows:—Ganēsa with his characteristic protuberance being very much distended after a heavy meal of his favourite *undrāllu*, was on his way to the temple to worship his father Siva, when the moon cast a look upon him so malevolent as to have the effect of bursting open the so prominent member of his anatomy. Upon this Ganēsa, being naturally somewhat irritated, cursed the moon, saying that whoever looked upon it would be subject to slander, and calumny, and like evils. The moon thereupon craved pardon for having so disturbed the equanimity of the son of Siva; but the curse was only removed on condition that, before looking upon the moon, everybody should hear the story of Samantakam. After this little episode Ganēsa proceeded on his way to the temple, where his father, by a stroke of his hand, healed his suffering offspring.

The continuation of the subject of Hindu Festivals will form the substance of the next chapter.

# CHAPTER XIII

## HINDU FESTIVALS.—*Continued.*

### पर्वाणि. (Parvāni.)

He who observes not approved customs and he who regards not prescribed duties . . . . . . is to be avoided with great care. (Manu III. 165, 166.)

In continuation of the subject of Hindu festivals the next that may be considered is :—

(8) DASARA OR DURGAPUJA. This is observed during the first half of the month *Ashvayuja* (September—October) and lasts for ten days. The tenth day is called *Vijayadasami* (the victorious tenth day). This festival is observed by all *Sāktass* or worshippers of the female principle, and is held in especial honour of Durgā, the wife of Siva. Her image, or what represents her image, is worshipped for nine days, and on the tenth it is cast into water. In the Circars no image is used, but the goddess is represented by a new brass drinking vessel, or earthen pot, containing nine kinds of grain, and turmeric roots, and coins; the mouth of the vessel being covered with a cocoanut and a folded piece of cloth, the whole, called *kalasam*, being adorned with leaves of the mango tree.

During this feast alms are freely distributed. Musicians go about playing on their instruments, demanding presents. Native schoolmasters take their pupils, all dressed in their best, to the houses of those who are likely to give them anything, and ask for presents. This is a regular harvest time for the schoolmaster, who often gets a good deal, as his requests for presents are liberally responded to. During these perambulations, the pupils carry bows and arrows, the arrows having a cup-like termination into which sweet smelling powder is placed and shot out upon those whom they visit. The pupils also

recite various things they have learnt; which recitations always begin with a verse in praise of Ganēsa. The pupils get presents of fruit and sweets, whilst the pedagogue gets money or cloths. In this way indigenous learning is encouraged and fostered.

Of late years this feast has been rendered notorious by indirectly giving rise to grievous riots between Hindus and Muhammadans. Last year, as all readers of the newspapers know, there were serious riots in Poona, whilst the terrible rioting and fearful bloodshed that happened in Bombay in 1893 must still be fresh in the memory.

A friend, well versed in such matters, has been kind enough to furnish the following account of the supposed origin of this bad feeling. It may not be out of place here to give these particulars, seeing that the subject must be one of more or less general interest. In 1884 there was a Hindu revival which to a certain extent, took the form of an imitation of the Salvation Army. The worship of Rāma is, as noted above, most popular. A Rāmabhajana party, carrying a *kalasam*, such as is described as the representation of Durgā, went in procession from their village to two adjoining villages, having a common boundary, and being joined by another party from each of the latter, called itself *Rāma Dandu* or Rama's army. The triple party then went in turn to each of the three villages adjoining two of the original triplet. From each of these, a new triplet branched out and repeated the process; so that the movement, believed to have started from somewhere in Mysore, spread in all directions. As Rāma's army is said to have consisted of monkeys, it was considered the proper thing for its antitype to engage in all kinds of mischievous pranks; and so its members broke branches off trees, pulled tiles and thatch off roofs, knocked the turbans off people they met in the way and insisted on their shouting "Gōvindā!" and disturbed Muhammadans at worship by singing uproariously before mosques, for long periods. This produced ill-feeling and riots between Hindus and Muhammadans. Unfortunately, before the animus

could subside, the Muharram and Dasara partly coincided for three years. During that time, the Hindus, in the places were the riots occurred, did not take any part in the Muharram, although the carnival portion of that commemoration of the martyrdom of Muhammad's grandson Hussain used in former years to be kept up principally by the Hindus. Having deprived themselves of this fun, the Hindus appear to have attempted to compensate themselves by getting up during the next Dasara a caricature of the Muharram. Had the details been purely Hindu adaptations, they would, probably as they have in other instances, have passed unnoticed. But they were considered by the Mussalmans, rightly or wrongly, to be gross caricatures, intentionally offensive. The Muhammadans objected especially to the introduction into the Dasara of the tiger disguise. The reason for this appears to be that this disguise has, in Southern India, come to be looked upon as the most distinctive feature of the Muharram, and it is, as a matter of fact, never seen at any other time. The way in which this commemoration of a mournful event became converted into a carnival is alleged to be this. The Mogul Emperors, and even the Mussalman kings of the Deccan, sometimes chose Hindu consorts. One of these is believed, when in trouble, to have endeavoured to add to the efficacy of her invocation of Hussain for his intercession, by vowing that if her prayer were answered she would exhibit some members of her family in a humiliating disguise during the Muharram. The object of her prayer being accomplished, she kept her vow. Her example was followed by other devout and anxious parents and others. The fame of the success of such vows induced Hindus also to make vows to the Muhammadan *pir* whose *Astānē* happened to be in their neighbourhood, or in the efficacy of whose intercession they had the greatest faith. To the original humiliating disguises, was afterwards added that of the tiger. In this case the object was not humiliation, bnt an indication of readiness to fight for Islam like a tiger, a smile invariably employed to describe the fighting of the

Seventy-two faithful followers of Hussain on the occasion which is commemorated by the Muharram. This disguise, more than any other, caught the fancy of the Hindus, who did not trouble to become acquainted with its significance. These disputes gave rise to others in connection with other Hindu festivals, at which also caricatures of the Muhammadan observances were introduced, and it is in connection with these that the most serious riots have occurred.

(9) DEEPAVALI, or the feast of lamps. This festival is observed on the last two days of the dark fortnight of the month *Āshvayuja* (September—October), and is taken part in by all classes of Hindus. It is held in memory of Krishna's victory over Narakāsura, the wicked giant (*Rākshasa*). Its chief features are the lighting up of the houses with numerous little lamps and the letting off of fire-works. There are no special temple services or processions at this season; it is merely a time of popular rejoicing. The streets present a very gay appearance at night on account of the numerous lights that are placed in front of the houses, and the letting off of fire-works in public places is not unattended with danger. Mimic combats take place in the streets between parties who hurl lighted fire-works at each other; and these battles sometimes become very real, ending in a good deal of rioting. Altogether the streets are not a very safe or pleasant place for quietly disposed people, particularly on the second night of the festival. Staid and quiet people hurry home before dark to escape the rowdy crowds, and they are careful not to move out of doors during the dark, if they can possibly avoid doing so.

(10) KĀRTIKĀPŪRNIMA, or the full moon of the month of *Kārtika* (October—November). This festival is observed in commemoration of Siva's victory over the three giants Tripurāsura. These giants are said to have inhabited three celestial cities made respectively of gold, silver, and iron, which, were adjacent to each other, and were capable of being moved about in company at the will of the giants. These malevolent beings were a constant source of trouble to gods and

men, who, at length, unable to bear it any longer, prayed to Siva for deliverance from the evil. This god, in the usual wonderful way adopted by such beings, slew the troublesome Tripurāsura and utterly destroyed their cities. This festival is observed on the full moon of *Kārtika*, as above, and is kept by all classes except strict Vaishnavas. It lasts only for one day and one night.

The day preceding the full moon is observed by the devout as a strict fast. In the early morning it is necessary to bathe in the sea, where possible, or failing that, in a river or tank or some other water. After moonrise, *i.e.*, at sunset, special worship is performed in the temples of Siva, after which the image is taken in procession through the streets with the usual musical and other accompaniments. It may be well to observe here that in all these processions of the gods, it is not the chief idol of the temple that is taken out, as may be supposed, for the chief idol is never removed from its position for any purpose whatever, after it has once been placed and consecrated (*pratishta*). What is used upon such occasions is a kind of representative or rather two representatives, which are kept for the purpose; one to represent the god and the other his wife. It should also be mentioned that when the gods are taken in procession, it is not to give the gods an airing, as is popularly supposed, but the idea is that those who are unable to go to the temple and look upon the image there, should have a chance of seeing its face in this way. The passage of the gods through the streets is also supposed to purify and bless the streets and houses. As the procession moves along, the devout may be seen placing their hands together, and making obeisance to the god (*Namaskāram*). Some bring offerings of various kinds which are placed in a receptacle under the car upon which the idol sits; and the priest blesses the giver by placing on his or her head the vessel before mentioned (*Rudrapādum*), repeating the appropriate words. A peculiar custom is followed upon this occasion, on the return of the procession to the temple. Two high poles are erected in front of the temple to

which is attached a thick wreath of straw, stretching across the road. This is set on fire and the whole procession must pass under the burning wreath (*jvālā-tōranam*—flame-wreath). This in some way refers to the triumph of Siva over the Tripūrāsura.

It is at this festival that women of the Smārtha sect especially worship the moon, with a view to such blessings as male offspring, long life, and prosperity. This worship is performed in somewhat the following manner. After the temple worship, women, in various groups, take a small thin silver medal, which is stamped with the shape of the moon, and place it upon some large leaf like the plantain or lotus, which is laid upon the ground in the courtyard of the temple, under the full rays of the moon. Upon the leaf is placed a little heap of rice upon which is put a betel leaf, and upon this again is placed a little sandalwood paste, and on the top of that, the little silver medal. Each separate group will have one of these temporary altars. Worship is then performed to this in the usual way by placing before it little lights of ghee and wick in brass saucers, and dropping upon it coloured rice and leaves and flowers, at the same time mentioning some of the names of the moon. An attendant priest, in the case of well-to-do people their own family priest, repeats a prayer in the name of the worshippers, and the *puja* is concluded by the women waving lighted camphor before the object of worship, saying at the same time some kind of prayer, probably an expression of their particular need or required boon. The little heap of things on the leaf, the medal included, is given to the priest as a fee, and perhaps a little money at the same time.

The woman who engage in this worship do not include young unmarried woman, or widows, or the aged. The prayer repeated by the priest, in the name of those for whom he is officiating, will serve to show the object with which the worship is done. It is as follows:—

रोहिणीनाथ सर्वज्ञ

प्रतिमापूजितो भवान् ।

आयुरारोग्यमैश्वर्यं
देहि मे पुत्रसंपदं ॥

O thou Omniscient husband of Rohini,
Who art worshipped in this image,
Grant me long life, health, prosperity,
And male progeny.

Rohini is supposed to be the wife of Chandra the moon.

(11) SAMVATSARĀDI, or the beginning of the year. This is the festival of the new year. The Tamil and the Telugu new year days are not on the same date, owing to the different modes of computation to which reference has already been made. The Telugu new year's day is the first day of the month *Chaitra* (March—April); and is observed by all classes. It lasts for one day only. This is not, strictly speaking, a religious festival (*vratam*), and therefore there are no special temple service or processions. The chief features of the day are the reading of the new Almanac and hearing the forecast of the events of the new year. New clothes also are worn, when procurable, and the food partaken of during the day is, as far as possible, composed of new materials, *i.e.*, new grain, and pulses, and such like, this being a kind of feast of ingathering. One dish, which must be partaken of by all who wish for good luck during the year, is a kind of conserve composed of sugar, tamarind, and the flowers of the *neem* or *margosa* tree (*Melia Azadirachta*), which is then in full flower. The bitter taste of this is not much relished, as a rule, but it is necessary that at least a small portion of the dish should be eaten. This seems to be analogous to the idea in England of the necessity of eating mince pie at Christmas or the New Year!

(12) MAHĀLAYA AMĀVĀSYA (the new moon of the great destruction.) This is observed as a day for offerings to the manes of the dead, who, through dying other than a natural death, may not have received the usual death rites. It occurs on the new moon of

the month *Bhādrapada* (September—October), and is observed by all classes; it only lasts for one day. It is absolutely incumbent upon the head of a family on this day to perform prescribed ceremonies, for the preceding three generations. Even in the event of there being no knowledge of any ancestors having died other than a natural death, in the full odour of sanctity, it is still necessary that the rites should be performed, lest there may have actually been some such accident. The ceremonies are very similar to the usual annual ceremonies for the dead (*Shrāddhas*), for which see the chapters on Hindu funerals.

Sea Bathing. In addition to the occasions, mentioned above, there are four seasons in the year that are considered very important, when it is necessary, if possible, to bathe in the sea. These seasons are the day of the full moon of *Māgha* (February), *Vaisākam* (April—May), *Ashādha* (June—July), and *Kártika* (October—November). At these seasons, those within reach of the sea will make an effort to go there, so as to take this holy bath. At all new moons, it is beneficial to bathe in the sea, whilst at other times, it is highly improper even to touch sea water. At these four special full moons, however, it is extremely meritorious to take the sea bath. All rivers flow into the sea, therefore at these seasons to bathe in its waters is equal to bathing in all the sacred rivers in the world. By this all sins, even of the most heinous kind, are completely washed away. Failing the sea, a bath must be taken in a river or a tank or even at a well, but above all, to bathe in the sea, is, at these seasons, considered most beneficial. Long before daylight crowds of people may be seen wending their way to the sea shore, some on foot and others in vehicles of various kinds, or in palanquins. It is of more benefit to go on foot, since it is a kind of pilgrimage, and it is considered most meritorious for any pilgrimage to be done on foot. Before actually setting out for the sea shore, it is incumbent upon the devout to bathe at home, and also again upon their return. The bathing must also be done fasting. The sea shore presents a very lively appearance on these mornings;

thousands of people, of both sexes, and all ages, castes, and conditions may be seen hurrying to the sea or returning after the bath, which is not taken, by the bye, until the sun has actually risen. The bathing is done as follows:—The bather walks into the water accompanied by a Brahmin, who repeats the *Sankalpam* (the name of the place, time, &c.) When the bather dips under the water three times. After this he makes three oblations to the sun by throwing up water towards it and saying *Sūryāya namaha* (hail to the Sun), after which he again dips under three times. He then comes ashore when he makes a little heap of sand which he proceeds to worship as though it were his particular deity. The worship is done in the usual way by dropping over the object flowers and coloured powder &c. as has already been described. After this worship is over, the worshipper takes up the little heap of sand and casts it into the sea. He then gives a fee to the Brahmin, who blesses him and it is all over. Those who are in a position to do so, bring their own family priest to perform this ceremony for them; but there are plenty of Brahmins at hand ready to make hay whilst the sun shines, and take advantage of the piety of the faithful. It is not all the bathers who go through the full performance; some merely bathe and make an oblation to the sun, without much further attempt at worship. Beggars in every stage of dirt and disease may be seen and heard; the road being lined with them. Here may be seen a leper, lying on the sand, with a cloth spread in front of him to receive alms; and there a miserable cripple, holding up his withered stump of an arm, or leg to appeal to the compassion of the passers by. *Mahārāja, Mahārāja, dharmamē jayam, dharmamē jayam,* (my lord, my lord, charity is prosperity)—these and similar cries are shouted out, and the passers by throw a handful of rice, or a few cowrie shells, or perhaps a coin on the cloth as they go to or return from the sea. There are stalls of the sweetmeat seller and the toy vendors, and the various surroundings of an Indian fair; the whole presenting a scene at once lively and gay.

Besides the general festivals, of which the above

are specimens, there are, what may be called, local festivals, some of which are only observed at some one particular locality, whilst others are kept up at places where a temple or shrine may have been put up in honour of some particular god or demigod. It may be interesting if some description is given of a local festival of which I saw something at its last celebration.

Near to Masulipatam there is a temple dedicated to the wife of Siva under her title of *Mahishāsura Mardhani,* or the destroyer of the demon buffalo. This buffalo monster (*Rākshasa*) did much evil, and was at length destroyed by Gauri or Durgā—so the tradition says. The temple in qnestion is in her honour, under the above name. The chief festival of this temple is held once a year in the month Chaitra (March—April) and it lasts altogether for sixteen days. On the evening of the last day, which is the day after the full moon, there is a great procession. called *Ambāriutsavam,* or the elephant procession. This procession passes through the town, and for about a mile beyond, to a place where there formerly grew a Zammi tree (Mimosa suma); this tree is an emblem of victory. The great temple car is also dragged out. In former days the car is said to have been taken all along the route with the procession; but since the Kistna canal has been dug it presents an impassable barrier to so cumbrous a Machine. There is an iron girder bridge over the canal; but it is not considered strong enough to be safe for the car to attempt to cross. Even the elephants have to ford the canal, as their stupendous weight might be too much for the bridge. Now-a-days the car is only brought up as far as the canal, a comparatively short distance, and is then taken back to the temple. The procession, in former days, was much grander than it is now; but even as it is, it presents a very imposing spectacle. The principal feature in it is the huge elephant, bearing in a howdah the procession gods of the temple, and having upon its neck the *Dharma-karta,* or temple patron, who is a local Rajah of some considerable position. It is said that a former Rajah

of this house endowed the temple with lands which bring in Rs. 12,000 per annum; how far this amount may represent the real revenue I cannot say. The procession is supposed to represent a hunt—*Pāru Vēta* or running prey—and is probably in some way connected with the legend upon which the festival is founded.

It was late at night when I heard the din of the approaching multitude, and I went and took up a position near to where the procession would arrive at its extreme limits. It was a weird sight. The huge elephant, most gaily caparisoned, came solemnly along, bearing its imposing burden. The Rajah, upon this occasion, was represented by his son, as he himself was absent in Madras, or some other distant place. There were horses, and bullock carts, the latter being for the Musicians with their barbarous instruments which made a terrible din. A troup of dancing girls marched along with their attendants, and there was an immense crowd of people crushing along on either side of the procession, though there was nothing of that rough horse-play one sometimes sees in an English crowd. The torches and line-lights lit up the whole throng, and, together with the bright moon, made it as light as day. When a halt was made, near, I suppose, to the imaginary Zammi tree, I made my way to the centre of the throng to see what was to be seen. Of course, I did not intrude myself so near as to cause any hindrance or possible defilement. I met with much courtesy, and was permitted to see what took place. A kind of circle was formed, in the midst of which, squatted down on the ground, were several Brahmin priests who performed the ceremony. A naked sword was held up by one, the hilt resting on the ground and pointing upwards. I was told that this sword was kept in the temple as being the one, or representing the one, with which Durga slew the demon. Worship was performed to this sword as it was thus held up. One of the priests sprinkled it with water, and pinches of *kunkama* powder, and other things, taken from a tray upon which the various articles were set out in little pots or receptacles.

During this operation the celebrant repeated verses or mantrams as fast as ever he could. The noise all around made his voice almost inaudible, and certainly, I should fancy, quite unintelligible to any one present. Indeed no one seemed to pay much attention to what he said. The dancing girls then began their usual monotonous singing, and contortions, and I took my departure. It is not easy to describe the effect the whole scene had upon one's mind—the only European in the whole vast crowd—the crushing shouting crowds, with their dark eager faces and bright-shining eyes, the glare of the torches and lights, the huge solemn Elephant with its gaudy trappings, the blare of the trumpets and the rattle of the drums, and, high above all, the clear moon shining in all its beauty, all combining to form a scene not soon to be forgotten. And this, one could not but reflect with much sadness, even in the midst of it all, and this is religion! this is worship! this is supposed to be an acceptable service to God! Truly they worship they know not what. "They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save." (Isa. xlv. 20.)

The following are the words enjoined by the *Purānas* to be said by the priest at the conclusion of the household worship performed at Hindu festive seasons. They will perhaps serve to indicate the motive which actuates those who observe the various festivals, and so may fitly conclude this paper.

ये कुर्वंति व्रतमिदं ।

भक्तिश्रद्धासमन्विताः ।

ते सर्वपापनिर्मुक्ताः ।

यास्यंति परमांगतिं ।

तत्तत्फलमवाप्नोति ।

देवेशस्य प्रसादतः ॥

Whosoever observes this rite
With care and with a devout mind,

Will be freed from all his sins,
And will inherit heaven.
He will realize all his desires
By the favour of the great God.

It will be observed that in all these observances there is nothing as to the state of heart and soul of the observer, nor is there anything showing the necessity of a holy life; everything points to the merit of mere outward observance of stated ritual. It seems, to a certain extent, to correspond with that mere outward observance of ritual which is so strongly condemned by God, through the prophet Isaiah. The Jews appear, as a nation, to have sunk into a state of mechanical observance of the outward forms of devotion, without any corresponding holiness or virtue in life and thought, and it is this state of things against which the prophet, in the name of the Almighty, most vehemently protests.

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isaiah i. 13, 14, 16, 17.)

## CHAPTER XIV.

## HINDU MENDICITY.

### याचन. (Yāchana.)

By open confession, by repentance, by devotion and by reading the Scripture, a sinner may be released from his guilt; or by almsgiving, in case of his inability *to perform the other acts of religion.* (Manu XI. 228.)

The virtue of almsgiving, of relieving the wants of our fellow-beings in a world where suffering and sorrow abound, is most fitly enjoined, more or less, upon the adherents of most religious systems; but there are many and very radical differences in the motives that underlie the exercise of this grace. That the mere indiscriminate giving of our substance is not true charity, is a fundamental truth which finds expression in the old Jewish proverb quoted by St. Paul in one of his Epistles:—"If any would not work neither should he eat." (2 Thess. iii. 10.) There is no doubt that this principle has often been set aside, yet it is, to a very large extent, that upon which Christians act in their deeds of charity. The sturdy mendicant is still to be met with, it is true, even in European countries, but public opinion decidedly protests against such impositions. In the East, however, and especially in India, the principles regulating almsgiving are widely different from those of the West, and so, too, the motives that lead men to dispense charity. If a man happen to belong to a certain section of the community, or if, indeed, he chooses to abandon all honest toil, and set himself up as a mendicant, then, according to the Hindu theory, it is a duty to part with one's substance in his behalf, quite irrespective of other and more righteous considerations. Mahārājā! Mahārājā! Dharmamē jayam! Dharmamē jayam! (My lord! My lord! Charity is

success! Charity is success!)—the everlasting cry of the road-side beggar—exactly expresses this idea; the mere giving is meritorious, quite apart from the worthiness of the recipient, and without any thought as to indiscriminate giving being demoralizing and rather productive of evil than good. The sleek, well fed mendicant goes his wonted round, and he must not be denied under pain of possible evils, contingent or remote, temporal or spiritual.

No one will deny that this spirit of almsgiving has its good side, and a very good side too. It provides, at least, an existence for the poor, the halt, the blind, and the helpless, who might otherwise be left to perish where there is no public system of relief, as provided by poor law boards and similar institutions in other lands. Many and great are the blessings resulting to the miserable and the destitute from this universal exercise of almsgiving; but carried to excess, as it is in this country, and unregulated by wholesome restrictions, as it seems to be, it not only tends to rob the industrious for the sake of the indolent, but, from the point of view of the political economist, it is a tax upon the resources of the country that creates and fosters an unproductive section to the detriment of the whole community. If any will not work, will not add his quota to the general weal though perfectly capable of so doing, neither should he eat.

It was but natural that, when the various rules regulating the life of the community were drawn up by Brahmins, they should have followed the universal law of human nature and taken care of number one. Much is said about alms in the sacred books of the East, but, to a very large extent, these books deal with the necessity of alms and gifts to Brahmins. This is particularly manifest in the Institutes of Manu. It is there stated that an oblation in the mouth or hand of a Brahmin is far better than offerings to holy fire; it never drops; it never dries; it is never consumed. A gift to one not a Brahmin produces fruit of a middle standard; to one who calls himself a Brahmin, double; to a well-read Brahmin, a hundred thousand

fold; to one who has read all the Vedas, infinite. (vii. 84-85.) Manu also says :—Let every man, according to his ability, give wealth to Brahmins, detached from the world and learned in Scripture; such a giver shall attain heaven after this life. (xi. 6.) Very early in the statutes, a universal law is proclaimed, the spirit of which pervades the whole code. This law calmly lays down that whatever exists in the universe is all, in effect, though not in form, the wealth of the Brahmins; since the Brahmin is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth. The Brahmin eats but his own food; wears but his own apparel; and bestows but his own in alms; through the benevolence of the Brahmin indeed other mortals enjoy life. (i. 100-101.) This is a pretty broad principle to enunciate, so it is easy to see how there is nothing derogatory in a Brahmin receiving alms, since he takes but what is his own, besides leaving a blessing to the giver.

According to religious enactment, a Brahmin's life is divided into four great stages, the first of which is that of a student. After being invested with the sacred thread and initiated into the Brahminical order (*vide* chapter on Yagnōpavītam), he is supposed to leave his father's house and reside for some years with a religious teacher, as an unmarried student. This is in order that he may acquire a knowledge of the Vedas. During this period the student should live by alms, begged for by himself; and although this state of things is perhaps nowhere carried out in its entirety in these modern days, still even now, at the investiture, the neophyte must ask for alms from those present as a part of the ceremony.

> Each day must a Brahmin student receive his food by begging, with due care, from the houses of persons renowned for discharging their duties, and not deficient in performing the sacrifices which the Veda ordains. (Manu II. 183.)

There is a vestige of this old Vedic custom still remaining, though it has changed somewhat in form to suit modern requirements. This is a system of

assisting poor Brahmin boys in their education, by the charitably disposed, in turn, providing meals for them. Besides the assistance that is given to such students by helping to pay the necessary school fees, and providing books, many students in our schools and colleges get their daily food by alms. One family, say, will agree to give one or two meals a day to a certain student, for a certain day in the week, and others will do the same until the whole week is provided for throughout the year. There is nothing lowering to the student in thus subsisting by charity; it is taken as a natural sort of thing and adds merit to the donors. It is not usual, I believe, to provide in this way for any other than Brahmin students. In the Northern Circars a poor student will sometimes tell you that he lives 'by weeks'; meaning that he gets his food in the manner stated above; that is, each day of the week he gets his food at a different house. The odd phrase 'living by weeks' has its origin in the Telugu word that is used in this connection. This is a far easier method than that adopted by many a poor scholar in western lands, who has to work hard for one portion of the year, in order to scrape together the wherewithal to pursue his beloved studies at the university during the other half. Each method is, perhaps, suited to the character of the people who adopt it; but certainly the Indian system would not be very congenial to the sturdy independence of spirit more manifest in the West.

The following are extracts from the *Mahābhārata*, showing the duty of aiding in the support of students, and the personal benefits to be derived from so doing :—

1. विद्यादानं महद्दानम्
अन्नदानं महत्फलम् ।
तद्दानात्पुण्यमाप्नोति
सर्वपापैश्च मुच्यते ॥

(1) Imparting knowledge is conferring a great boon.
Giving of food is most meritorious.

He who acts thus obtains great merit,
And will be freed from all sin.

2. विद्याविनयबुद्धीनाम्
अन्नाद्यं वासराण्यनु ।
प्रयच्छन्नित्यमव्यग्रः
परलोकफलाशयः ॥

(2) Those who to the humble scholar,
Give food every day
Regularly and ungrudgingly,
With desire for heaven, (will obtain it).

To the poor traveller, the laws and customs of India are very kind, and many who have occasion to move about from one place to another, though utterly devoid of means, are able to do so with comparative comfort. The necessitous traveller is always sure of a meal, at least, when he arrives at a village, if he waits until the midday or evening meal is served. The laws of hospitality are very real laws here; and it is imperatively binding upon those who can do so, to give some food, at least, to necessitous travellers, regardless of caste or condition. Of course a Brahmin must go to Brahmins, for caste reasons, and a Sudra, or Panchama will go, in the first place, to his own people by preference, but if his own people cannot help him, he is sure of something, even from the Brahmin. To send a hungry suppliant empty away is not only unkind, it is a positive sin. There are many enactments on this point, scattered up and down the various sacred books, and these are all held binding upon the hearts and consciences of the people. The following are a few specimens culled from the *Mahābhārata*:

अतिथिर्यस्य भग्नाशो
गृहात्प्रति निवर्तते ।

पितर: तस्य नश्यंति
दशवर्षाणि पंच च ॥

From whosesoever house
The stranger goes empty away,
His ancestors will perish
For fifteen generations.

अतिथिर्यस्य भग्नाशो
गृहात्तस्यतु गच्छति ।
तस्मात्सुकृतमादाय
दुष्कृतं तु प्रयच्छति ॥

The stranger who unsatisfied
From any house goes away,
From that householder he takes all merit.
And leaves his sins behind.

पापो वा यदि चंडालो
विप्रघ्न: पितृघातुक: ।
वैश्वदेवेतु संप्राप्त:
सोतिथिस्स्वर्गसंक्रम: ॥

Where he a sinner or an outcaste,
Or even a Brahminicide, or parricide,
Whoever is entertained at meal time,
That stranger will cause the host to attain
heaven (*Svargam*).

It is not with this, what may be designated casual mendicity, that we have any quarrel; rather we would commend such almsgiving, though it is easy to see how, even here, the thing may be abused by the lazy loafing tramp. We cannot, however, view with any such complacence a form of regular systematic mendicity that abounds on all hands, and that must be a

terrible drain upon the resources of the people. We allude to the professional religious beggars—a fraternity answering in some respects to the begging Friars of the middle ages, although they are under no vows, and do not live in communities. This profession is not confined to any particular caste, or section of the community, and there are many varieties of it. It is impossible, within the prescribed limits, to give a full and complete catalogue of the brotherhood; and it is intended here only to take a few specimens, by which a tolerably accurate notion may be formed of the whole. First in order, as is but meet, we will give a description of the mendicant Brahmin.

In inculcating the merit of almsgiving, it is always enunciated that the highest form of charity is to give to the Brahmin. Manu, after mentioning various conditions in which one may be placed, goes on to say :—

> These nine Brahmins let mankind consider as virtuous mendicants, called *snatacas*; and to relieve their wants, let gifts of *cattle or gold* be presented to them in proportion to their learning.
>
> To these most excellent Brahmins must rice also be given with holy presents *at oblations to fire and within the consecrated circle*; but the dressed rice, which others are to receive, must not be delivered on the outside of the sacred hearth: *gold and the like may be given anywhere.*
>
> Let every man, according to his abiltiy, give wealth to Brahmins detached from the world and learned in Scripture: such giver shall attain heaven after this life. (xi. 2, 3, 6.)

It must not be supposed that, whatever the original theory may have been, all Brahmins live in these modern days by gifts and alms. This is far from being the case. The learned professions, and other walks of life are crowded with Brahmins, who labour for their subsistence as do others. Probably it is only the principle of the thing, as stated above by the lawgiver, that now survives; though even in these days, it is a principle that is acknowledged as such, and in various parts, and in manifold ways, to a certain

extent, is still acted upon. There is, however, even now, a section of Brahmins who are professional mendicants—who depend for their daily sustenance upon the alms of the faithful. Of course the very poor of all castes beg, and the poor Brahmin is no exception to this rule; those whom we are now describing are the professional mendicants. These are principally the *Pānchāngam* Brahmins. A *pānchāngam* is an Almanack; the word being compounded of *pancha,* five and *angam,* a number, or division. This alludes to the five specific things taken into consideration in computing by astrology, *viz.*, the lunar day, the day of the week, the sign in which the moon happens to be, the conjunction of the planets, and the combinations. The *Pānchāngam* Brahmin is one who, by studying the Almanack, is able to state propitious or unpropitious times. He gets his livelihood by going certain rounds, day by day, from house to house, declaring the condition of things, as per the Almanack, and receiving in return a dole consisting, usually, of grain. He is not held in much respect by his own caste people, but he is much looked up to by other castes. He is consulted by his constituents, from time to time, when they wish to know the propitious period for any undertaking, as starting on a journey, making an important purchase, putting on new clothes, or new jewels, or when about to take up a new appointment, or when any other important event is contemplated. He is a Smartha by sect; that is, he is really a worshipper of Siva, and wears the marks of that god, but at the same time he respects and worships Vishnu. He dresses very plainly, or rather he dresses very little at all. He has the loin cloth, and an upper cloth over his shoulder. His head is bare, but, as a Smartha should be, he is plentifully marked with the three horizontal white marks of Siva; this not only on the forehead, but also across the shoulders, on the breast and stomach, as well as on the upper and lower parts of each arm, and across the back of the neck. Of course he wears the sacred thread, hanging over his left shoulder, as a sign of being a twice-born. In his hands he carries a copy of the current Alma-

nack, and a brass vessel in which he collects his doles. He also has a spare cloth, to hold the 'collection', which he carries as a bundle across his shoulder. He does not confine his attention to Brahmins, but he goes also to other castes, except the Panchamas, and a few other sections of the community, considered to be too inferior for his attention. On going his daily round, when he comes to a house, he shouts out Sītārāmābhyam namah! (Hail to Sītā and Rāma!); or Rāmachendra parabrahmanē namah! (Hail to the beneficent supreme god Rāma!); or Umā Mahēshvarābhyam namah! (Hail to Siva and his wife Umā!); or some other expressions of the same kind. The people of the house, upon hearing the call, present themselves, when he will go just inside, and repeat the details of the Almanack for the day, his particular point being to tell the unpropitious period of the day (*varjam*), to which special attention is paid by the people of the house. After this he receives his dole of rice; or very occasionally, a coin or two; and then takes his departure to the next house on his list. The native Almanack is headed with *slōkas* declaring the benefits to be derived from hearing the *pānchāngam*. The following are specimens of these verses :—

1. पंचांगश्रवणं पुण्यम्
सर्वकर्मसुसाधकम् ।
प्रत्यहं बुद्धिमान् कुर्यात्
सर्वपापक्षयो भवेत् ॥

2. तिथेश्चश्रिय माप्नोति
वारादायुष्यवर्धनम् ।
नक्षत्राद्धरते पापं
योगाद्रोगनिवारणम् ॥

3. करणात्कार्यसिद्धिश्च
पंचांगफलमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्यहं श्रवणादेव
सर्वपापक्षयो भवेत् ॥

(1) Hearing the Almanack is meritorious;
In all undertakings it ensures success.
The prudent must never fail to hear it.
By this all sins will be destroyed.

(2) Hearing the lunar day will bring wealth;
The day of the week will prolong life;
The star will rid of sin;
The conjunction of the planets will rid of disease.

(3) And the combination will promote success.
These benefits result from hearing the Almanack
Every day by merely hearing,
All sin will be destroyed.

The declaring of the Almanack by the *pānchāngam* Brahmin is somewhat as follows:—He begins by repeating, in a sing-song voice, and at a very rapid rate, some such verses as those quoted above, showing the benefits to be derived from hearing the Almanack; he then goes on, in a more deliberate manner, to state the details of the day. Those for the day upon which this paper is now being written would be as follows. An old pandit friend reads it out, in just the same way as though he were a professional, and to the following effect:—Manmadha nāma samvatsara— chaitrabahula—dashami—shanivaram—45, 56—shravanam nakshatram—40, 44—Vishkambha yōgam—20, 18—karanam kimstughnam—14, 15—Varjam divi 23, 1—tyajyam 3, 30—dinapramānam 31, 20—Ashvanī 1—Arkhabhukti 1, 15—Chandu 20—April 20.

The meaning of this may be expressed as follows, bearing in mind that a Hindu hour is equal to twenty four English minutes and that thus the hour forms the sixtieth part of a day:—The year Manmatha—

the month Chaitra; the dark fortnight—the tenth day of that fortnight—the name of the day, Saturday—the length of the day, 45 hours and 56 minutes—the star in the ascendant being Shravanam—lasting for 40 hours and 44 minutes—the conflux of Vishkamba—lasting for 20 hours and 18 minutes—the combination kimstughnam—lasting for 14 hours and 15 minutes—the unpropitious time commencing the 1st minute of the 23rd hour of the day—lasting until the 30th minute of the 3rd hour—the length of the daytime 31 hours and 20 minutes—the sun being in the first quarter of Ashvani—the sun having passed 1 hour and 15 minutes of its present sign (Aries)—the 20th day of the moon—English time, April 20th.

It appears to be the custom in many houses to have a certain portion of grain set apart, each morning, to be distributed to the beggars who may come that day. The grain is put into a small basket, and is given into the charge of, perhaps an elderly woman, or perhaps one of the children, or some such person who may not be particularly engaged in household duties. When the mendicant comes before the door and cries out for alms, the one in charge of the basket will give a handful or two, according to the quantity set aside for charity. Should the supply become exhausted through the multitude of callers, a further supply may be given out, if the household can afford it; otherwise the late comers must depart without receiving anything. Of course it must often happen, when beggars are so numerous, that many must go away unsuccessful. It is a pleasant idea, though, this setting aside a portion for the needy; only it would be more pleasant were it not for the fact that so many of the recipients are not worthy of alms at all. Sunday appears to be a specially good day for beggars—this being a most propitious day; and more alms are distributed on Sunday than on other and ordinary days. It need scarcely be mentioned that when the *pānchāngam* gentleman appears, he is received by some of the elders, who may happen to be at home, as his daily message is of importance.

The next class of professional mendicants whom

we may describe is the JANGAM mendicant. The *jangamas* are a sect of Saivas who wear the Lingam on their person, either in a box suspended from the neck or else tied in a cloth round the arm. They are a class of Sudras, who, theoretically, do not hold caste distinctions, and in various other ways repudiate Brahminical rites. Many of this sect follow the profession of tailor and dress-maker, whilst a good number are native musicians. Some of this sect are professional beggars. The Jangam beggar may be known by his having the upper part of his face and eyes plentifully covered with the white horizontal marks of Siva. He also is clean shaven, not even wearing the universal top-knot (*sikha*). He is more plentifully clothed than the ordinary mendicant, his chief garment being a long reddish coloured coat. He also wears a cap. He carries in his hand a long staff with a steel trident at the end of it; while slung from one shoulder is a bell, and a conch shell, and from the other the alms bag. Round his neck is a rosary, composed of the rough spherical seeds of the *rudrāksha* tree (Elæocarpus ganitrus); and altogether he is a person not easily to be mistaken. He will have his constituents in various quarters, and he will visit them in turn, according to their number, and his own particular need or fancy. On coming to a house, he will stand and ring his bell, to call attention to his presence, at the same time shouting out the words, Mahādēva shembō—names of Siva. Then standing with his trident staff planted upright by his side, he will begin to sing a snatch of some song, according to the attention that may be paid to him. On receiving a dole, he will blow a long blast on his conch shell, and then take his departure. The conch is held sacred to Siva, who is supposed to enjoy the peculiar sound made by blowing through it. The following are specimens of the songs thus sung. They are taken from the Telugu, and an attempt has been made to preserve the ideas, though somewhat altering the form, so as to be the more suitable for English readers. It will be noted what a pessimistic ring there is about them. The Jangams are pure

pessimists. The word Siva, Siva, appear to be used as mere expletives :—

### A SONG OF DESPAIR.

*Refrain.*—Trust not in the flesh ;
Do not trust in it.
Oh Siva ! Siva !
Do not trust in it.

1. This body with all its poor deeds is but vain ;
It but lingers a time here alone.
A mere acting puppet 'tis seen for a day ;
But at night it has perished and gone,
Trust not in the flesh, &c.

2. Their hopes are all vain, 'tis all fruitless I know ;
Who contentment and joy ever crave.
Though wealth without measure one has to his store.
He must leave it and sink in the grave.
Trust not in the flesh, &c.

3. We live in the midst of our lov'd ones who may
Perchance linger around us for years ;
Yet when the dread messenger calls us away,
Then alone we must leave them with tears.
Trust not in the flesh, &c.

4. Fond ties of affection the sweet thoughts of love,
Are but wretchedness, sorrow, and woe.
Death takes the fond wife, he spares not the loved child,
And our tears must eternally flow.
Trust not in the flesh, &c.

5. The soul that ne'er ponders on Sivas' great name,
Is but hopeless and worthless and dead.
All else is but vanity, mere empty show,
And such life's but one long weary dread.
Trust not in the flesh, &c.

### A SONG OF MEDITATION.

*Refrain.*—Why murmur Oh my soul at death,
We each must feel his dart.
Alone into the world we came,
Alone we must depart.

1. What wast thou then before thy birth?
Why grieve at life's each smart?
Enough thou know'st the saviour's name,
Serve him with all thy heart.
Why murmur Oh my soul, &c.

2. Though one may wander like the crow,
He can but meet his fate.
Seek Siva, trust to his strong arm,
And thus find heaven's bright gate.
Why murmur Oh my soul, &c.

3. When thou'st attained the Yogi's power,
And quit of life's vain show,
The narrow way to heaven is found,
Unaided thou canst go.
Why murmur Oh my soul, &c.

4. The flesh and all its ties are vain,
There's nought in life sublime,
Nor can we look for help from man,
In seeking the divine.
Why murmur Oh my soul, &c.

The subject of Hindu Mendicity will be continued in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HINDU MENDICITY.—(*Continued.*)

### याचन. (Yāchana.)

Both he who respectfully bestows a present, and he who respectfully accepts it, shall go to a seat of bliss; but if they act otherwise, to a region of horror. (Manu iv. 235.)

The next class of religious mendicants that may be described is the *Sātānis*.

The Sātānis are amongst the Vaishnavas what the Jangamas are among the Saivas. This sect was founded by Chaitanya in the 15th century, and originally its adherents were of all castes. Now, however, in the Circars at least, Sātānis are all Sudras; they particularly worship Krishna, whom they hold to be the supreme God. A large number of this sect are minstrels, or mendicants. Like the Jangam the Sātāni should be clean shaven, both face and head. On his face and on various portions of his person he is adorned with the trident-shaped mark of Vishnu. On his shoulder he carries a guitar-shaped instrument, having four wire strings. On this he strums as he goes along, and with it also he accompanies his songs. He has a pumpkin-shaped vessel to receive his doles, which he transfers to a cloth when the vessel is full. This vessel will also be adorned with the religious marks of Vishnu. He begs from all castes and conditions expect the Panchamas. When he comes in front of a house where he expects alms, he may shout out 'Shri matē Rāmānujāya namah'! (Adoration to the most excellent Ramanuja!), and then begin to sing one of his songs, or hymns, of which the following are specimens, rendered into English. They are taken from the Telugu, as were those of the Jangam in the previous chapter. In the first of these,

Vishnu is called the saviour of the elephant (*danti varda*), in allusion to a story in the eighth book of the *Bhāgavatam* which has been already alluded to in the ninth chapter. An elephant was bathing in a tank, when it was attacked by a crocodile which would have killed it had not Vishnu or Hari come to its relief—so the story goes:—

### A MEDITATION ON VISHNU.

*Refrain*:—My soul! why settest thou thyself
On things that are but vain.
The saviour of the elephant
Thy highest love doth claim.

1. My soul! full satisfaction seek,
Engage thyself in this.
Go meditate on Hari's feet,
Make this thy chiefest bliss.
My soul! why settest, &c.

2. My soul! know death is ever near,
E'er ready to destroy.
On him who's great in excellence,
Thy heart and mind employ.
My soul! why settest, &c.

3. My soul! why spendest thou thyself,
On children, wife, or wealth.
Shri Vishnu serve and thus attain.
To joy of soul and health.
My soul! why settest, &c.

4. My soul! consider him who reigns,
At Kanchi's mountain home.
Whose wives Bhudevi, Shridevi,
Share his great golden throne.
My soul! why settest, &c.

The following is a hymn to Rāma, the various allusions in it may be briefly explained. They are stories to be found in the *Ramāyana*. Māricha (verse 3) was a malevolent being (Rākshasa) son of Tātaka. He

and his brother Subāhu impishly interfered with a Rushi named Vishvāmitra and prevented his performance of a sacrifice (*Yagnam*). Being unable to endure this interference, and at the same time powerless to prevent it, the Rushi appealed to Rāma for assistance. Rāma came and destroyed the two brothers with two arrows. Subāhu was slain with a fire arrow; and Mārīcha being struck with a wind arrow (*vārgerbānam*) fell into the sea.

In order to express his gratitude for this deliverance, Vishvāmitra told Rāma of a certain king named Janaka who had promised to give his daughter Sita to wife to any one strong enough to break a certain bow named Hara, or Harathanassu (verse 4). Rāma accompanied by Vishvāmitra went to the king and succeeded in performing the required test and thus won his wife Sita.

Upon Rāma's banishment from his father's home into the eternal forest, he was accompanied by his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmanna. This story has already been alluded to in the fourth chapter. One day whilst the three were thus living in the forest, near a mountain called Chitrakūta (a mountain in Bundelkhand), Rāma lay sleeping with his head in Sita's lap. A demon crow (*Rākshasa*), named Kākāsura (verse 5), seeing the bare foot of Sita, and thinking from its red colour that it was meat, came near and bit the foot so that the blood began to flow. (Red is the beauty colour amongst Hindus.) At the cries of Sita, Rāma awoke, and on seeing the bleeding wound was told what had been done. Upon this, the enraged husband, made an arrow of a blade of grass, and shot it from his bow at the demon crow, which was sitting near by on a tree. This blade of grass became an arrow of fire and followed the crow wherever it flew, no matter in what direction it went. At length Kākāsura being unable to bear the persecution any longer, flew to Rāma and craved pardon. This was granted on condition that the culprit should lose one eye by way of punishment. To this Kākāsura consented whereupon his life was spared; but he lost an eye.

### PRAISE TO RAMA.

1. Thou parent of Brahma;
Thou glorious Sri Rāma;
Thy greatness what mortal can tell.

2. Attend and be gracious;
I'll tell forth thy praises;
Thy glory what mortal can tell.

3. Who slew foul Mārīcha;
And saved Vishvāmitra;
Thy prowess what mortal can tell.

4. Who brake the bow Hara;
And thus gained sweet Sita;
Thy vigour what mortal can tell.

5. Who spared Kākāsura,
When pleading for mercy;
Thy kindness what mortal can tell.

6. Who e'er bestows bounty,
On those who seek from thee;
Thy goodness what mortal can tell.

7. Thou friend of the friendless,
Relieve all my distress;
Thy pity what mortal can tell.

Another well known religious mendicant is the Dāsari, or Pariah priest. This functionary is the one who performs all religious ceremonies for the Pariahs. He officiates at their marriages and funerals; and at their celebrations for the dead, and all other such ceremonies. He is also Physician, Astrologer, and Soothsayer; and is, altogether, a very important man. He receives fees for his services, but he also lives by begging; and from the fact that he begs from all castes, and, hence, from those who do not need his official services, he must be classed as a Mendicant. He is a Vaishnava by religion, and he wears the trident-shaped mark of Vishnu on his forehead,

and also on his shoulders, neck, and stomach. He is also known to belong to the Rāmanūja sect by having a clean shaven face and upper-lip. He carries on his shoulder a guitar-shaped native instrument, having three wire strings; on this he strums as he goes along, and with this he accompanies his songs. The strings are struck with a spiked-ring kind of instrument, something like what is used in playing the European Zither. He carries either on his head, or on his shoulder, or fastened round his waist, a large fluted brass, or copper vessel, which is used for collecting the alms. This vessel is also ornamented with the trident-shaped marks; as also is the musical instrument. He carries in his hand a pair of wooden castanets, or a pair of small bell-metal cymbals; these he uses to beat time as he sings. As he walks along he sings to himself, striking his cymbals, and strumming on his instrument. He is generally a jovial, merry fellow, of goodly condition as to his body; being quite the reverse, in this respect, of the pessimastic Jangam described above. He looks on the bright side of things, as becomes one of his sect, and he is a very popular visitor as he goes his rounds; people enjoy listening to the merry fellow's songs. As he comes into a village, or near a house where he expects a dole, he will break into a song, of which a specimen may be rendered into English as follows. The refrain is sung at the commencement of the song, and also at the end of each verse, as is generally the case with native songs. The author of this song is supposed to be one Srinivas who alludes to himself in the fourth verse by name. The whole song is supposed to be a divine meditation of the author upon his god Krishna:—

## DIVINE MEDITATION.

*Refrain*:—Thou lord of the Sages all hail!
Thou dweller on Yedus vast height.
Thou great purifier all hail!
To thee goodness is e'er a delight.

1. O thou in whom all things do move;
Thou beauteous being divine.
Thou refuge of all in distress;
Thine car to my sorrows incline.
Thou lord of the Sages, &c.

2. Thou lovest me is it not so?
Thy mercy 'ill evermore crave.
I love thee too is it not so?
Stretch forth thy right hand and now save.
Thou lord of the Sages, &c.

3. Thou friend of the one great supreme.
Thine anger I ever would flee.
I call but thou answerest not,
In love do thou turn unto me.
Thou lord of the Sages, &c.

4. In greatness thy name doth excell
Thy speech is as nectar to me.
Oh stay of thy slave Srinivas,
To thee, favoured of Vishnu, I flee.
Thou lord of the Sages, &c.

On coming in front of a dwelling where he expects to receive alms, the Dāsari will strike up some such song as the following. It is in praise of Vishnu, who is also known as Nārāyana. This term is also sometimes used as an appellation of the great supreme (Paramēshvara). The author of this hymn is supposed to be one Venkatadas who speaks of himself in the third verse :—

## A HYMN TO VISHNU.

*Refrain* :—Nārāyana! Nārāyana! the nectar of thy name,
To me is life, to me is health, to me is more than all.
Thou lotus eyed, creator thou, thou most beneficent;
Be gracious now, attend my prayer, yea hear me when I call.

1. Much fasting I cannot sustain.
Meditation and prayer I know not.
I feeble and worthy of blame,
Would share in thy bounty and grace.
Nārāyana! Nārāyana! &c.

2. I practise not giving of alms,
   Know nothing of heavenly ways.
   Oh ! look upon me thy poor slave,
   And aid me to bask in thy rays.
   Nārāyana ! Nārāyana ! &c.

3. Oh refuge of Venkatadās ;
   Great spirit of wisdom and grace !
   Enthroned on thy lotus attend ;
   Grant me to behold thy lov'd face.
   Nārāyana ! Nārāyana ! &c.

On receiving his dole, the Dasari will pronounce a blessing upon the giver in some such words as the following :—

### THE DASARI'S BENEDICTION.

धनकनकवस्तुवाहनसमृद्धिः
पुत्रपौत्राभिवृद्धिः
आयुरारोग्यैश्वर्याभिवृद्धिः
ममाशीर्वचनं ब्रह्मशीर्वचनं
श्रियःपतिकृपया क्षेमपूर्वक
सकलसाम्राज्यसिद्धिरस्तु ॥

Wealth, gold, and other riches in abundance—abundance of children and grandchildren—long life, health, and prosperity —My blessing is Brahma's blessing—by the mercy of the all bountiful, may you have prosperity in abundance.

The Dāsari, and the Pānchāngam Brahmin are much sought after on account of their skill in settling which are good or bad times for any particular event to take place. In this respect they answer somewhat to the fortune-tellers of Europe. Suppose a man wants to know what is a good time to perform a marriage, or to start on a particular journey, or anything of the kind, he will seek out a person skilled in such matters,

in order to know when is the best time to commence the undertaking. The calculation seems to be made somewhat in the following manner. There are twenty-seven stars which are supposed to guide the affairs of mankind. There is a rule by which certain letters of the alphabet, and combinations thereof, are attached to certain stars, and this is the starting point in these predictions. Suppose a man is about to start on an important journey, and he wishes to know when he should set out. On repairing to a Dāsari, he will be asked his name. Suppose the name to be Venkayya, the first combination of this name being Ve, and that being attached to the star Mrugashira calculations are made, with the help of the Almanack, as to the position of that star with reference to the planetary system generally, and in this way a conclusion is arrived as to a certain particular period of time—an hour, or a day, or a week, or a year, as the case may be—being favourable or otherwise. Of course a fee is attached to such services; the amount of the fee depending, to a certain extent, upon the nature and importance of the event contemplated.

The fourth stage of a Brahmin's life is that of the *Sāniyāsi*, during which he is supposed to leave his home and family and live entirely by alms. He should shave off his *sikha*, or topknot, and discard his Sacred Thread; and, going forth as an empty-handed mendicant, live a life of hardship and self-denial for the remainder of his days.

A gourd, a wooden bowl, an earthen dish, or a basket of reeds, has Manu, son of the self-existing, declared fit vessels to receive the food of Brahmins devoted to God.

Only once a day let him demand food; let him not habituate himself to eat much at a time; for an anchorite habituated to eat much becomes inclined to sensual gratifications.

At the time when the smoke of the kitchen fires has ceased, when the pestle lies motionless, when the burning charcoal is extinguished, when people have eaten, and when dishes are removed, *that is, late in the day,* let the *saniyasi* always beg food. (Manu, vi. 54—56.)

This may have been a general rule in Vedic times, but now-a-days there are very few indeed who adopt this mode of life; and those who do, are perhaps mostly to be found at Benares and other Hindu holy places. The chief Gurus (Superiors) of the three great sects, who follow respectively the *Dvaita, Advaita* and *Visishtadvaita* schools of philosophy, must be Saniyāsis; only instead of leading a wandering life, they reside at the chief seats of theological power; and though they subsist by the alms of the faithful, their revenues are in reality very large indeed. From time to time they go on tour in great state, with elephants and horses, to confirm the faithful, and to decide upon religious matters, as well as to receive alms. Personally, these great Gurus are said to live as Saniyāsis should do, in great simplicity of life and habits.

Besides the great orders of religious mendicants, of which the above named may be taken as samples, there are large numbers of professional beggars who travel about the country, adopting various devices to attract the attention of the people, and extract alms for themselves. One may often see a small group of men, usually of the cow herd caste, having with them several trained bulls. These are dressed up in a fantastic manner, and have been taught to dance, or bow their heads as if in assent to anything said to them, or place their feet upon their masters, or to perform various other tricks. The men have musical instruments and drums, and are themselves clothed in a grotesque manner. These are very sturdy beggars, and when they receive anything, the givers may be blessed by the bull licking them. There are also the snake-charmers, the trained bear-leaders, and the trained monkey-men, who travel up and down the country begging. There is, too, the professional story-teller; and it may be interesting to mention that the story-tellers in these parts, amongst other stories, tell that of Bussy and his wars with the English. Some people go about with a sort of portable puppet show, and some of these will also flog themselves with a kind of scourge, and this until the blood flows, all to excite pity or

admiration and to get alms. Some also go about with a small double drum, shaped like a large hour-glass, which is sounded very rapidly by a quick turn of the wrist bringing a hard knotted cord to bear upon the parchment at both ends; these perhaps also add to their accomplishments by barking like a dog. Numberless, indeed, are the devices of the lazy rogues to get a comfortable livelihood without hard labour. The indiscriminate giving of alms is an outgrowth of the religious system which enjoins giving for the mere asking, and that to one and all, whether orthodox or heterodox. This is also carried to such an extreme that not only is it meritorious to feed animals of various kinds, but also even ants, to which a handful of broken grain will be cast.

Gifts must be made by each housekeeper, as far as he has ability, to religious mendicants, though heterodox; and a just portion must be reserved, without inconvenience to his family, for all sentient beings, *animal and vegetable.* (Manu, iv. 32.)

Connected with the subject of mendicity is that of Satrams or Choultries, and also sheds erected in the hot season for the giving of water, or butter-milk, or the like, to the poor and thirsty wayfarer. There is no town, and scarcely any large village, which has not some kind of Satram, be it ever so humble a building, that has been erected by charity—sometimes by an individual, and sometimes by a group of persons, or perhaps a whole village—to accommodate travellers. In a country where there are no inns, or hotels, as in Europe, these form an excellent substitute; and considering the habits of the natives, they are more suitable than anything European could be. So useful indeed are these places, that Government, and public bodies like Municipalities, sometimes either build them themselves, or assist by grants in the building of them. These Satrams are of two kinds, those which are merely for lodging, leaving the visitors to provide for themselves; and those which, in addition to lodging, provide food gratis to the needy traveller. It is this which brings the Satrams within the subject of mendicity.

Many of these institutions have endowments of lands attached to them, which, in some cases, afford a large income. A large choultry may have different divisions for different castes; whilst others may be only for one particular caste. It is only poor travellers who will receive their food gratis; the well-to-do will provide for themselves, though they gladly make use of the accommodation provided. It is considered very meritorious to build or endow a Satram, and there are passages in Hindu sacred books which enjoin this form of charity. The following is a quotation from the Shēshadharmam of the *Mahābhārata*, which bears on this subject :—

1. देशे ग्रामे पुरे मार्गे
अन्नसत्रं प्रकल्पयेत् ।
तद्दानात्पुण्यमाप्नोति
यावच्चंद्रदिवाकरम् ॥

2. नान्नोदकसमं दानम्
सर्वेषां तृप्तिकारणम् ।
तद्दातृणां भवेत्पुण्य-
मिह लोके परत्र च ॥

(1) In a country, village, town, or public way.
A food-giving Satram should be erected.
Merit thus obtained will last
As long as the sun and moon endure.

(2) There is no gift like unto water, and rice,
Which are satisfying to all.
Those who give these will obtain merit,
Both in this world and in the next.

Allusion may be made to the various occasions upon which articles of food are distributed gratuitously, to Brahmins, or others, as the case may be.

Notice has been taken of this in the chapters on marriages, and funerals, and ceremonies for the dead. Upon these and various other occasions, some of which have been noticed in these pages, food is distributed to Brahmins, and to the poor, according to the ability of the giver. It is these things which cause such occasions as marriages and funerals to be so great a source of debt, with all its kindred troubles; custom, however, and the rules of religion are so strong that few if any dare to disregard them.

There is perhaps no need to dwell upon the ordinary street beggars, of whom there are so many to be met with in this country as in other lands. In England, the laws are severe upon the ordinary beggar, and mendicity, in the form in which we see it in India, is there suppressed by the strong hand of the law. That being the case, Government takes care that public institutions are provided for the relief of the really indigent; and this provision is met by a regular tax upon the community. It is not that the English are a less charitably disposed people than the Hindus; but they are also a practical people, and care is taken, as far as possible, that charity shall not flow in unworthy channels. Doubtless in the West, as in the East, there is a good deal of imposition on the good feelings of the charitable; but such evils are there steadily suppressed, both by the law of the land and also by public opinion. It would be impossible to legislate against mendicity in India, in the present condition of the country; nor would it be wise, or beneficial to attempt to do so, until something could be devised to better meet the wants of the truly indigent and helpless, of whom there are large numbers up and down the land. It is the abuse of charity that we deprecate and not charity itself. In these chapters we have dealt chiefly with those forms of mendicity which are an outcome of, and are fostered by the Hindu religion. Not that anything approaching to an exhaustive list has been given of the religious mendicants to be met with; those described are only samples of a variety whose name is legion. Nothing has been said of what may be called the forbidding,

and even disgusting side of the question, details of which are found in the writings of Ward and others. Such things may, even now, be seen by those who care to enquire or to look for them; where idle vagabonds, by the most disgusting means, practically force people to supply them with what they ask for. If a proper computation could be made, it would, I believe, show that a very large section of the people live directly or indirectly, upon so-called charity; and considering that the Hindus are, as a people, comparatively poor, this must be a heavy tax upon the industrious portion of the community. This is not the only evil caused by such widespread mendicity, for its effects upon the morals of the mendicants themselves, as well as public manners generally, cannot but be most deplorable. Indolent habits are ever the parents of general evils, and the results of such a state of things as has here been described, must have a very evil effect upon the moral and physical welfare of a people. Charity in itself is a grace that, in its true and righteous exercise, not only confers benefits, but brings a reflex good. This cannot, however, be said of mere giving, as such, apart from the worthiness either of the object or the motives impelling the giver. The giving, merely with a desire of obtaining merit for oneself, or to receive a *quid pro quo* in the shape of pardon for sin, or a better position in a future birth, lacks the very essence of true charity, which is the doing of good for the sake of doing good. It must not, however, be inferred, that many Hindus are not truly charitable, in the best sense of the word; for true benevolence is not confined within any bounds, national or religious; but I do distinctly say that, as far as reading and observation enable me to form an opinion on the matter, the teaching and practice of Hinduism, as regards charity, is not in accordance with the spirit of true beneficence, properly so-called. How different it is from the teaching of Christianity the following quotations show:—

As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal. vi. 10.)

For we hear there are some which walk amongst you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. (2 Thess. iii. 11-12.)

Let him labour working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. (Eph. vi. 28.)

# CHAPTER XVI.

## HINDU FUNERALS.

### उत्तरक्रिय. (Ūttara Kriyā).

Single is each man born; single he dies; single he receives the reward of his good, and single the punishment of his evil deeds.

When he leaves his corse, like a log or a lump of clay, on the ground, his kindred retire with averted faces; but his virtue accompanies his soul. (Manu iv. 240, 241.)

The various modes of disposing of the dead amongst different nations, and the ceremonies connected therewith, have always been an interesting study. We are able by such inquiry to understand a good deal as to the religious ideas of the people, and to enter somewhat into their inner life. This being the case, it is hoped that the present subject will not be devoid of interest, and perhaps of a certain amount of instruction. One would desire to approach such a topic in anything but a light spirit, for, though much of the ceremonial, and the meaning attached thereto, may appear strange and peculiar, still the sorrow and longings when we part with our dear ones, and pay for them the last sad offices, are feelings we experience in common with our fellow-men of whatever nation or faith. Callous indeed must be that one who could pass even the rudely formed bier of the Hindus, with its strange and uncouth surroundings, without experiencing, to some extent, feelings of saddened solemnity.

There is a curious passage in Manu where the question seems to be raised, as to how even death can have any power over such holy beings as Brahmins, especially those learned in the Vēdas, and who, undeviatingly, perform the duties laid down for their guidance. It may be interesting to quote the passage in question, though it is rather a long one, seeing that it gives as a reason for the mortality of a twice-

born, his probable remissness in performing religious rites, or his possible offending in the matter of diet. There is nothing said as to the possible immortality of one who may not deviate from the rules and regulations laid down for his guidance; perhaps the hypothesis is considered so vague as not to be worthy of mention. Chapter V. of Mānava-Dharma-Sāstra which opens with the passage quoted, is largely composed of the most minute rules and regulations as to diet; and it is difficult to conceive the possibility of mortal man avoiding some offence according thereto, and thus rendering himself amenable to the "genius of death." The passage is as follows:—

The sages, having heard those laws delivered for the conduct of house-keepers, thus addressed the highminded Bhrigu, who proceeded in a former birth from the genius of fire.

How, Lord, can death prevail over Brāhmans, who know the scriptural ordinances, and perform their duties as they have been declared?

Then he, whose disposition was perfect virtue, even Bhrigu, the son of Menu, thus answered the great Rishis: Hear, from what sin proceeds the inclination of death, to destroy the chief of the twice-born.

Through a neglect of reading the Vēda, through a desertion of approved usages, through supine remissness in performing holy rites, and through various offences in diet, the genius of death becomes eager to destroy them. (Manu v. 1—4.)

Amongst Hindus of all castes, and both sexes, when a person is so ill as to appear near death, the family priest is summoned to administer the last sacrament (*jīvanamaskāram*) which last solemn rite is administered in the following manner. The sick person is lifted from the couch upon which he may be lying, and caused to recline upon the ground, supported, perhaps, by a low stool. It seems a cruel thing to lift a dying person off the comfortable couch and thus, perhaps, hasten the end; but the rules of religion call for it, and there can be no demur. A couch is not considered a pure place (*madi*); and the friends of a sick

man will not even feed him whilst lying on the couch, unless he may be so ill as to be unable to move or be moved. For the purpose of taking food he must be lifted from off the couch, and made to sit on pure mother earth. The priest then approaches with the *panchagavyam,* which may be called the sacramental elements. This consists of a mixture composed of the five products of the cow—milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung. The dying person is first asked to recite after the priest certain Mantrams, and, if too weak to articulate, he is desired to recite them within himself. Afterwards the vessel containing the nauseous mixture is placed to his lips, and some of it is poured into the mouth. This whole ceremony is called *prāyaschittam,* or ceremony of expiation. Of the various texts recited, two are given below as specimens:—

ज्ञानाज्ञानकृतदोषप्रायश्चित्तार्थं पंचगव्यसंस्कारं करिष्ये ॥

"I take this sacrament of panchagavyam for the absolution of my sins, both those committed voluntarily and involuntarily."

यत्वगस्थिगतं पापं
देहे तिष्ठति मामके।
प्राशनं पंचगव्यस्य
दहत्यग्निरिवेन्धनं ॥

Whatever sins adhere to the skin and bone
Now present in this my body;
May the partaking of this panchagavyam
Destroy them as fire destroys fuel.

The sick person is then replaced upon the conch to await the end. Some time, perhaps days, may elapse after this sacrament, before death, and indeed the person may recover. If from sudden death, or any

other cause, this ceremony cannot be performed, the death is not considered so happy a one; and there seems to be something to provide specially for such cases in the Mantrams that are said at the commemorative ceremonies for the dead (*shrāddha*).

When it is evident that death is very near, the dying person is laid on the ground, which has been previously prepared by smearing with cowdung and placing the sacred grass darbha (*poa-cynosuroides*). Much importance is placed upon a person breathing his last on the bosom of pure mother earth. Indeed it is a common way of cursing, when in anger, to say—" When you come to die may there be no one to place you on the ground."

There are certain phases on the moon during which it would be considered a serious calamity for any one to die inside the house, as has already been mentioned in the second chapter on the Hindu Home; we may, however, again allude to the matter here in this connection. Should death draw near at such a period, the patient is carefully carried outside to die in some outer verandah. Should the event, through any misfortune, take place inside the house during such a period, the whole dwelling would be considered polluted; it would have to be entirely vacated for some time, after which a ceremony called *punyāhavachanam* would have to be performed in the place, to purify it before it could be reoccupied. Sometimes when such a calamity does befall a household, in order to avoid the trouble and cost of moving out entirely, a hole is made in the side-wall of the house, near the room where the death took place, and the body is passed outside through the hole. In such a case, only that one side of the house would be impure and have to be purified; the other part could be inhabited as usual. This mode of action however, is not considered proper or respectable, and it is thought to reflect dishonour upon the dead.

Much need not be said about the sad weeping and wailing that is given way to so bitterly by the survivors, at the time of death. The wailing of eastern women is proverbial; but it must be witnessed, and

heard to be fully understood. The men are quiet in their grief; it is not considered seemly for a man to weep, and wail; but the females seem to abandon themselves completely to their sorrow, and their lamentations are both loud and long. Sometimes they will tear their hair, or beat their foreheads, and roll their bodies about as if in great agony, as they give utterance to their sorrow for the dead. I know of nothing more heart rending than to witness such giving way to grief; the effect upon one at the sight of it is inexpressibly saddening.

As soon as death has taken place, a light is put at the head of the body, and preparations are at once made for the funeral. The chief person at the funeral is the near relative who has to perform the necessary rites, and who is called the *Karma Karta* or Karta (the one who acts). This is the eldest son, if there is one who is so old as to have received *upanayanam*. Failing such a son, if the dead person is a woman, her husband; if a man, his father; if the father is dead, the next brother, and so on in order of nearest relationship.

All that has been described hitherto, applies to all—both to those who burn and those who bury their dead—both modes are in use amongst Hindus. The present chapter will treat of those who burn their dead—and the next will take up the case of those who bury, showing any difference in usage.

Usually only a few hours elapse after death before the funeral. There is, however, no fixed rule on this point; it seems to depend on circumstances.

The dead body is now washed and adorned with the *pundrams* (sacred marks), and then, being clothed with only one long cloth, it is put in a sitting posture, leaning against the wall, the head alone being uncovered. The Karta now performs a hōmam sacrifice in front of the dead; The fire for the hōmam is brought from the house fire, and the sacrifice consists of dropping into it ghee, and rice, and the green twigs of some such tree as the ravi or peepul

(Ficus religiosa)—Mantrams being repeated the while, of which the following is a specimen:—

प्राङ्मुखाग्ने । मम । अभिमुखो । भव । सुमुखो । भव । सुप्रसन्नो । भव । यथोक्त जिह्वया । हविर्गृहाण ॥

O fire do thou turn towards me; look kindly towards me; have favour upon me; with thy seven tongues, spoken of (in the Vēdas) graciously partake of my offering.

After the hōmam the body, enveloped in a new white cloth, is placed upon the bier. The bier is a hastily formed construction of two long poles, usually bamboos, with seven pieces of wood tied across. It is said that *seven* cross pieces are used to represent the seven upper worlds.

Some of the fire from the hōmam is placed in a new earthen pot to be carried in the procession by the chief mourner. The body, wrapped in the new cloth and fastened to the bier, has the two thumbs, and also the two great toes tied together with cords.

The bier is carried by several of the relatives, or at least by persons of the same caste. It would be considered pollution for a person of any other caste to assist in this office:—

"Let no kinsman, whilst any of his own class are at hand, cause a deceased Brahmin to be carried out by a Sudra; since the funeral rite, polluted by the touch of a servile man, obstructs his passage to heaven." (Manu v. 104.)

There is an expression used to one another amongst Hindus—"You will soon ascend a palanquin carried by bearers of your own caste," meaning you will soon die.

The procession consists of a few of the friends, sometimes even females, with the men carrying the bier, and the chief mourner, or Karta, carrying the pot of fire. Where music is employed, the musicians also form part of the procession, playing their wild music. It may be well to notice that those who bury their dead always have music; those who cremate have it some-

times, though it appears in such cases to be unlawful, or, at least, irregular. On the way to the cemetery the procession is stopped three times, and the bier placed on the ground. The face is then uncovered, and a Mantram is said. This appears to be done from the fear that, owing the speedy funeral, the person may not be really dead after all. The Mantram used is this :—

ओं जीव पुनरागच्छसिवा ॥

"O spirit! hast thou returned?"

The cemetery (*shmashānam*) is a vacant spot set apart for this purpose. Every town and village has one or more according to its size, and it is usually situated to the north-east. The burning ground is a dreary place enough, and is utterly unlike what is sometimes imagined as an eastern cemetery—with its shady trees and cool paths, adorned with white and glistening statuary, and all the adjuncts conjured up by a poetic mind. It is generally a mere waste, barren, neglected spot with nothing to distinguish it from any other waste, except here and there a few blackened patches, testifying to more recent or more ancient fires. These blackened places, and a few broken pots are generally all there is to mark the Hindu 'God's-acre.' The burying places, too, are, as a rule, kept something in the same state of utter neglect; though sometimes, if private property, they may be planted with trees, and kept nice; this however, it must be admitted, is very much the exception.

On arriving at the ground with their melancholy burden, the friends will probably find the funeral pyre already made, or in course of preparation. In villages, in the case of poor people, each householder puts out a little fuel to help form the funeral pile; this is collected by the man who splits the wood and prepares the pyre. In the villages the one who does this is the *Vettyman*, a kind of public messenger, and low official drudge attached to each village, always a Pariah, and generally holding a small piece of land which, with certain fees, forms his remuneration.

For funerals, part of his fee is the cloth wound round the corpse, and the sticks of which the bier is made.

On arriving at the spot the bier is set down, and the body is put on the pile. Before being thus placed, the cloth in which it was wrapped is taken off, any jewels in the ears, or else where, are also taken off, as also is the sacred thread, and the waist cord. The body must be completely naked—as it came into the world, so it must thus depart. The corpse is laid on the pile with its head towards the south, and its legs to the north; it is laid on its back, but the face is slightly turned towards the east.

The Karta now perform the *pradakshina* ceremony. He takes an earthen pot full of water and makes a small hole in the bottom of it from which the water may slowly trickle out. With his hair all hanging down his back, he will take the pot of water on to his shoulder, and, as the water slowly runs out, he will walk round the pile, having his right shoulder towards it. This is done three times; before the second round, a second hole is made in the pot; and in like manner, a third hole is made before the third round. After the three circumambulations, he will throw the pot over his head behind him and it is dashed to pieces. This is supposed to assuage the thirst of the Prēta during the fiery ordeal.

The Karta now performs a *homam* sacrifice, and then, taking some of the sacred fire, applies it to the right side, and breasts, and shoulders of the body as it lies on the pile. This being done the supreme moment has arrived when, taking some of the sanctified fire, he applies it to the pile, near the head of the body, and sets it all alight, during which time the priest repeats Mantrams of which the following are specimens:—

प्रेतोपासनान् उल्मुकानादाय
चितेहि पुरस्तात् दक्षिणमुख-
स्थिष्ठन् प्रेतस्य दक्षिणवक्षसि
स्तनयोरुपरि भुजमूलेनिदधाति ॥

After performing the prēta homam, he (the karta), takes brands (from the *homam*), and standing with his face towards the south, places a brand on the right side, and breasts, and shoulders (of the corpse).

मिनामग्निविदा होमाभिषेको मस्याद्वाचं चिल्कषि पोमाशरीरं ॥

O fire do not regret that thou art consuming this dead one. Do not sorrow whilst thou art consuming his skin and his whole body.

After this setting fire to the pile, the mourners sit somewhat apart, whilst those who carried the bier stay near to adjust the fire, from time to time, until the skull is heard to burst, when the Karta is shaved by the barber, after which he bathes. His head and face must be completely shaved, except the sacred top-knot (*sikha*) ; but should the deceased be younger than he, this shaving is put off until the tenth day.

The chief mourner now return to the house with his friends, but they do not enter it ; they simply go there to get the materials for the *Nitya karma* sacrifice, which must now take place, and before which the Karta should not re-enter the dwelling. It must be observed, however, that if it should be after dark in the evening before the Karta can have thus arrived, the Nitya karma ceremony will not take place until the following morning. This ceremony can never be done after darkness has set in. The Karta with the Purōhita, and any relatives or friends who care to accompany him, now takes some fire and fuel, and also some rice, ghee, curds, and pulse for a sacrifice. He also receives from the Purōhita, a small round stone called *prēta shila,* which, upon the consecration ceremony being performed with reference to it, (*pratishta*), is supposed to become the personification of the *Prēta,* or disembodied spirit, of the deceased. This stone the Karta ties up in a strip of cloth previously torn from the winding sheet of the deceased. This strip of cloth he wears as a kind of *Yagnōpavitam,* over the *right* shoulder, during the performance of the Nitya karma ceremonies for the

ensuing ten days. During all these ceremonies this stone is honoured, and treated as though it were really the spirit of the dead.

The party proceed to a particular place, outside the town or village, where all such funeral rites are performed. This place is usually a well, or near a tank, or river, and it is only used for this particular purpose. On arriving at the place in question, the Karta proceeds to bathe, and then to cook the food which he has brought. The prēta shila is then placed into a little receptacle formed for it of leaves—the leaf of the lotus or some such leaf—and it is then consecrated by the repetition of mantrams. A small portion of the cooked food is then waved before the stone, or offered to it, with suitable words. This is supposed to appease the hunger of the Prēta, as also is water, which is poured over it, supposed to appease its thirst. After this the remainder of the cooked food is scattered to different sides, some thirty-two different Mantrams being repeated, calling upon the crows, and kites to come, and devour what is thus scattered. The Mantrams are appeals to the disembodied spirit to come, in the shape of the different kinds of birds, and partake of the food thus provided. All this is repeated every morning for ten days. The following is a specimen of the texts thus said :—

गृध्रवायसमुखेन प्रेतो भुज्यतां ॥

May this prēta enjoy this food by means of the mouths of these kites and crows.

When this ceremony is over, the scattered food is eaten by the kites and crows which fly around in expectation of the feast, the signs of which they appear to know well.

After this is all finished, the party return home. On entering the house, the Karta must purify his eyes before looking upon any of the household, by fixing them upon the light before spoken of as having been placed on the spot where the deceased last lay.

He then proceeds to get a pot of water which he suspends from a beam over the same place, that is where the dead breathed his last. A small hole is made in the bottom of this pot, and the water is allowed slowly to drip on to the ground near the place where the head lay. Here also is put some earth having mixed in it nine different kinds of grain. This pot is left there for the ten days of the Nitya karma, and is supposed to assuage the thirst of the spirit which is thought to still hover near the spot. From the time of the death up to this, no food has been cooked in the house; but now a meal is prepared, a small portion of which is carefully placed near the dripping water—also for the refreshment of the disembodied spirit. This food is renewed daily during the ten days of the Nitya karma ceremonies. This last act may be said to end the ceremonies of the funeral day itself, but not, as will be seen, all the ceremonies for the dead.

On some one day of the ten during which the Nitya karma rites are performed, there is a ceremony called *Sanchanam* (collecting). This takes place usually on the fourth day, and it is performed at the burning ground—it being different to and besides the daily rite at the prēta place above described. The Karta and the Purōhita, with a few friends, and probably a few brahmins—especially if a fee should be given to them for so coming—will proceed to the burning ground, taking with them fire from the house and also rice, ghee, and curds, with pots for cooking, besides some of the sacred *darbha* grass. The Karta then gathers together some of the pieces of bone that may be left amongst the ashes of the funeral pile. These bones are preserved in a new earthen vessel or urn (*asthipātra*), for a longer or shorter time, after which they are taken and thrown into some sacred river; or, failing that, buried in an unfrequented place. In the case of wealthy people, it is a common thing for Brahmins to be paid to take this urn with the calcined bones all the way to Benares, there to be thrown into the sacred Ganges. There is a shlōkam as follows which is current amongst the Purōhitas showing the

benefits to be derived from the bones being thus cast into the Ganges :—

यावदस्थि मनुष्याणां
गंगातोयेषु तिष्ठति ।
तावद्वर्षसहस्राणि
ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥

How long soever the bones of a man,
Are in the waters of the Ganges ;
For so many thousands of years
They will be respected in Brahma lōkam.

The rest of the ashes are carefully gathered together, and put aside, or perhaps buried. The Karta now proceeds to prepare a place for cooking the materials he has brought for the purpose. This is done by sprinkling a spot of ground with water and smearing it with cow dung. He then bathes, and cooks the food, after which he performs a homam sacrifice. This being done he, with suitable mantrams, of which a specimen has been given in connection with the Nitya karma rites, casts food to the crows and kites which have come there for the meal. This food is called—*prētāhāram* or food for the spirit.

On the tenth and final day of the mourning, the near relatives, with the family priest and the Karta, assemble at the place where the Nitya karma rites are performed, for the last important ceremony.

The food is cooked and scattered to the birds, with the repeating of Mantrams, for the last time; after which the chief mourners are all shaved and bathe; so as to be rendered free from defilement. The brass pot in which this food has been cooked for the past ten days, as well as the prēta shila (the small stone), are now thrown into the water by the Karta, as being done with. This is called *Shiladhivāsam* or placing the stone. The pot is afterwards secured by the Purōhita as a kind of fee. After this a homam is

performed by the Karta, alms are distributed to attendant Brahmins and all proceed to their homes.

If the deceased were a married man, it is at this last ceremony that the poor widow is, as one may say, degraded into her state of widowhood. This rite is called *Sūtrachchēdam*, or cutting of the cord. I know of nothing in the whole range of Hindu rites and ceremonies, that is more saddening that this relic of barbarism; and yet it is still in full active force, even at the present day. As though it were for some fault of hers that death has taken away her husband, she is now to be initiated into that state of degradation and misery which is the lot of the poor Indian widow. No thought of youth or beauty, no bonds of nature or ties of affection can ward off this inevitable curse. The bright and happy life is visited with this dire anathema, and the iron rule must have it course. The relatives and friends of the poor forlorn creature assemble at the house, and the victim is adorned for the sacrifice. Her festive raiment, is put on; and she is also beautified with her jewels, and flowers, and sweet smelling sandal-paste. The beauty is intensified with rouge and bright pigments, and all is arranged as for a festive day. Oh the bitterness of it! the unutterable misery! For a time her loved friends weep with her, and embrace her, condoling with her on her fate; after which she is taken in a palanquin of some sort, and conveyed to the scene of her degrading. Arrived here, and at the proper moment, her bright clothing and jewels are taken off, and she must henceforth have only one coarse covering; her beautiful long hair, the glory of her womanhood, is cut off, and her head is close shaven, as it must ever more thereafter be; the Mangalasūtram, or marriage token, of which so much has been said in the chapter on marriages, is cut off, and she is now a widow indeed. This cutting off of the marriage cord is always done by a woman, as if to make the ceremony, if possible, the more degrading to her sex. The poor widow is then taken back to her home, ever after to be a drudge and a thing for contempt, until the hand of death may relieve her of her misery. What wonder is it that so many, in full

contemplation of the life long misery, preferred the death of a suttee; and to escape the evil to come gladly ascended the funeral pile! The position of the Hindu widow is one that, for its attendant miseries, and also its temptations to evil, has not perhaps its equal in the world. What wonder is it that, to escape her wretchedness, or may be to conceal her shame, so many a poor creature is driven to the suicides death. A bitter cry on a pitch darknight, followed by a heavy splash as a leap is taken into the clammy depths of some terrible Indian well—a hasty enquiry the next morning, followed by a speedy funeral—another victim to the written and unwritten man-made codes which selfishly and cowardly heap the miseries of life upon the frailer being—leaving the stronger one, simply because he is the stranger, to enjoy the kernel and sweets of life, whilst her portion is the husk and the bitterness. It must be remembered to the credit of the Tengalai Vaishnavas, unorthodox though they may be, that they refrain from, inflicting on their widows the dishonour of shaving the head.

In the event of the widow being a child, not having yet arrived at the age to join her husband, the only ceremony is the breaking off of the Mangala-sūtram; the other ceremonies and degradations are reserved to the time when she may have arrived at full age, when the whole ceremony is gone through, very much as above described. Can any thing be more pathetic that the thought of a bright little thing growing up free and happy, in her own loved home, probably for a long time unconscious of the fate that lies before her; and yet with that destiny fixed, as though engraven with a pen of iron—immutable, certain as death.

On the eleventh day there are some ceremonies at the house which include the feeding of Brahmins. On this day too, in days gone bye, there was a ceremony called *Ekāvhanam* (calling of one) by which a Brahmin, for a sufficient consideration, took upon himself the sins of the deceased, and expiated the same by twenty-one days seclusion and repeating numberless times the Gāyatrī, and similar ceremonies.

This, however, now appears to be an obsolete rite; at least it seems never to be performed in the Circars. Instead of this, thirty-two lumps of rice and ghee, mixed together, are taken and thrown into a pit near to which a hōmam sacrifice is made. This is a singular ceremony, and reminds one somewhat of Jewish rites as prescribed in the Levitical law. This thought is, however, more prominently suggested by another ceremony that is sometimes performed on this day—a ceremony strongly suggestive of the expiatory rite of the scape-goat. A young bull is dedicated by being stamped with the mark of Vishnu's wheel or the trident of Siva, as the case may be. By this the sins of the deceased are supposed to be transferred to the animal, and it is set free to wander for ever, at its own will, as a sacred animal which it is meritorious to feed and care for. Even if such a bull were to get into the fields and eat the growing corn, it should not be driven out; and one may often see in the bazars, one of these huge pampered creatures helping itself, in a lordly manner, from the grain baskets of the merchants. Sometimes a cow calf is also devoted, and a kind of marriage performed between the two; but this does not appear to be often done. Those who cannot afford to give such costly offerings will, on this day, at least give a cloth or two to the Brahmins. This ceremony of dedicating an animal as a sinbearer will be seen to be worthy of further consideration, in its possible connection with the Jewish rite above alluded to, when it will be found, further on, in the chapter on unorthodox funerals, that something of the kind is also observed amongst such a primitive tribe as the Tōdas of the Nilgiri hills in Southern India, and such an unorthodox people as the Badagas of the same range of hills.

On the twelfth day, the last, and a most important one, of the various funeral ceremonies is performed called the *Sapindi Karanam;* but this rite will be described in the next chapter when we come to speak of *Shrāddhas.*

A few words should be said about mourning; for the Hindu idea of mourning is not conveyed by the

English term. With them it means uncleanness, ceremonial defilement; and it is quite apart from the natural sorrow caused to survivors by death. The word used for mourning, in the true Hindu sense, is *Ashūshi* or *Sūtakam,* both which words mean ceremonial defilement. The duration of this mourning varies according to the condition of the deceased. In the case of mere infants the time is about one day. In the case of a boy who has not yet celebrated the *Upanayanam,* or of a girl as yet not married, the time is three days; and after that, in either case, the proper time is ten days. In the case of a married female, whether she may have yet joined her husband or not, her own parents and brothers and sisters have this ceremonial mourning for three days. During these periods, the near relatives of the deceased are considered unclean, and their touch would ceremonially defile any person or thing. They must not enter their own kitchen or touch any cooking utensil; the food, during the days of mourning, must be prepared by some one not personally connected with the deceased, although, of course, of equal caste. Should it be impossible, from any cause whatever, to obtain the services of a proper person to cook for them, as for instance a family being alone at a long distance from their caste fellows, although such a contingency rarely happens, the ceremonially unclean ones may procure provisions, and temporary cooking utensils, and prepare food for themselves in some place other than the usual kitchen—to enter this in an impure state would render the stored provisions and everything therein unclean and hence worthless. The mourners will not lie down upon a mattress, as it would be rendered unclean and call for much trouble in purification; they also will not put on the coloured portions of the ordinary sacred marks; they will refrain from wearing gay coloured garments and, in various other outward ways, they will manifest their defilement. During these days, also, it is customary to refrain from all kinds of indulgences, as for instance tasty food, the use of betel and tobacco or snuff, or any like personal gratifications. With the

prescribed days, however, this mourning comes to an end, and things then go on as usual, after the necessary purificatory ceremonies. This, of course, is a different thing to the heart-sorrow, the real mourning, which cannot be confined within prescribed limits by any code or custom.

We have here endeavoured to give a pretty full outline of the chief ceremonies connected with Hindu cremation. We advisedly say the *chief* ceremonies, for there are others, beside those here described. Enough has, however, been narrated to give a fair idea of things so far. It must be understood that we have been speaking, all along, of things connected with the highest castes, and even in their case the ceremonies may not always be thus carefully performed; doubtless in numbers of instances the affair is disposed of in a much more summary manner; still, this is as it should be, and as it is really done in, perhaps, the majority of cases.

We reserve for the next chapter an account of the ceremonies connected with burying the dead; as also a description of the *Shrāddhas* or ceremonies periodically performed by the survivors for the benefit of the spirits of deceased ancestors.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## HINDU FUNERALS.—(*Continued*).

## उत्तरक्रिय. (Uttara kriya).

"A mansion with bones for its rafters and beams; with nerves and tendons for cords; with muscles and blood for mortar; with skin for its outward covering.

"A mansion infested by age and by sorrow, the seat of malady, and harassed by pains, haunted with the quality of darkness, and incapable of standing long; such a mansion of the vital soul let its occupier always cheerfully quit.

As a tree leaves the bank of a river, when it falls in, or as a bird leaves the branch of a tree at his pleasure, thus he, who leaves his body by necessity or by legal choice, is delivered from the ravening shark, or crocodile, of the world." (Manu, vi. 76—78).

In the previous chapter, an account is given of the ceremonies performed at the funerals of those Hindus who practise cremation, and also of the *Nityā karma* rites performed during the ten days succeeding the death. In this chapter it is purposed to describe some of the chief rites and ceremonies performed in the case of those who bury their dead; as well as to give some account of the *Shrāddhas,* or Hindu ceremonies for deceased ancestors.

The great mass of Hindus are worshippers of fire, in some form or other; indeed, fire worship is one of the earliest cults of India, it being one of the vedic forms of Nature worship—a deification of the phenomena of nature, which has ever been one of the first forms of departure from the worship of the one true God. As fire worshippers, therefore, the Hindus burn their dead—making that sacred element the vehicle for the destruction of the gross and material form in which the divine element no longer dwells. There are some Hindus, however, who depart from the ordinary orthodox faith, and pay allegiance to

earth (*prudhivi*) as a deity; and who hence bury their dead, instead of practising cremation. Amongst these are the *Lingadharis,* those worshippers of Siva who wear the lingam (*the phallus*), the emblem of their God, upon their person; but who, although they include, Brahmins amongst their number, are not considered orthodox. Indeed this sect is opposed to all the chief Brahminical religious customs, and, as one difference amongst many, they bury instead of burning their dead. The *Jangams,* again, who are closely allied to the Lingadharis, and of whom mention was made in the chapter on Mendicity, and also the *Sātānis* described in the same chapter, all bury their dead. This is also the case with a section of the *Goldsmith* and *Weaver* caste, that is those of them who worship the Lingam. It is also worthy of note that those Hindus who bury their dead, do not observe the impure days, which are so strictly observed by those who burn.

Besides there being those whose custom it is to bury under all circumstances, there are conditions under which those who usually practise cremation, dispose of the dead by burial. In the first place we may mention that *Sanyasis* (Hermits), of every sect, are buried—a portion of salt being placed in the grave with the body. The only exception to this is when the body is simply cast into some sacred river. These holy persons are past the stage when ceremonies of any kind are necessary, and this is given as the reason for the above practise. Amongst the three higher castes, all unmarried girls are buried, and all boys who have not undergone the ceremony of *Upanayanam,* or initiation into the state of the twice-born. This is a deviation from the law laid down by Manu, who seems to imply that it is only in the cases of children under two years of age that cremation should not be performed. The passages, on this point, from the ancient law-giver are as follows:—

"A dead child under the age of two years, let his kinsmen carry out having decked him with flowers, and bury him in pure ground, without collecting his bones at a future time.

"Let no ceremony with fire be performed for him, nor that of sprinkling water; but his kindred, having left him like a piece of wood in the forest shall be unclean for three days." (v. 68—69.)

In the case of Sudras, boys and girls are not, as a rule, married so young as in the three upper castes; and the practice amongst them seems to be that unmarried boys and girls, under the age of eight or ten, are buried. There is no exact rule as to the age.

All those who die of small-pox, of whatever sect or caste, are buried at once without any ceremony whatever. This practice probably arose from sanitary causes, although the common people give a religious reason for it. Some say it is because this disease is caused by Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, and, as no sacrifices by fire are made to her, she would be displeased if they burned her victims.

In the case of those who practice cremation, when they lose one of their children, it is taken away and buried without any ceremony whatever. They leave it "like a piece of wood in the forest" and it is all over. There are no ceremonies at the time, except that, in some cases, food is cooked near the grave and thrown to the birds for three days; but this without any repeating of Mantrams. There are also, in such cases, no Shrāddhas, or periodical observances for the dead. This is the rule, but human nature cannot always be entirely repressed, and it appears to be not an uncommon practioe for a mother who may have lost a child, to give food or presents, once a year, to some little boy or girl, as the case may be, of about the same age and condition as her lost one.

There is much less ceremony connected with burial than with cremation. Up to the time of the procession leaving the house for the cemetery, the rites are much about the same in both cases, except that there is no *hōmam*, or sacrifice by fire. It is here that the chief differences begin. The body is decked out with flowers, and fine clothes; the face is exposed, and the sacred marks are daubed on; and, in the case of

females, the jewels are also put on. As the body is buried in a sitting posture, the bier has to be made in a somewhat peculiar form to suit the same. The body is placed as though sitting in a kind of open sedan chair—the bier being called *Anantashayanam*, of the everlasting couch. Amongst the Lingadharis the bier is borne by any of the sect, regardless of caste, or whether wearers of the sacred thread (*Yajnōpavītam*) and hence considered twice-born, or those who have not that privilege and distinction. Often the bearers will be a mixed number from various castes. This fact may seem a surprising one to those who are only conversant with the customs of the more orthodox Hindus. There is always music with the procession, and on the way the bier is put down three times, and the plaintive question "O spirit hast thou return" is put to the deceased by the Purōhita just as in the case of those who cremate, as already described in the previous chapter.

On arriving at the cemetery, the grave, usually a very shallow one, is found ready prepared and the ceremonies at once begin. The first thing is to purify the place; and this is done by sprinkling the grave, and its surroundings with water in which *Vibuthi*, has been mixed; at the same time a mantram is repeated by the purōhita. This mantram is the one quoted in the chapter on Sacred Marks as the first of the three used by Vaishnavas on painting on their Pundrams. It is an appeal to earth as a deity, and it may be well to quote it again in this connection:—

मृत्तिके हन मेपापं
यन्मयादुष्कृतं कृतं ।
मृत्तिके ब्रह्मदत्तासि
काश्यपेनाभिमंत्रिता ॥

Oh earth! destroy my sin,
Whatever sin may have been committed by me.
Oh earth! thou art a gift of Brahma,
Thou hast been purified by Kasyapa.

The body is then placed in the grave; before putting it in, however, the clothes, and jewels are all taken off, and it is stripped quite bare. The manner of putting the body into the grave is very peculiar amongst the Jangams. I do not know whether this custom is followed by any other sect, or whether there is any thing answering to it in the case of those who do not act so. This also may be merely a local custom. At any rate, it was told me by a Jangam friend, and the following story was given to account for it.

Many years ago there lived a Jangam mendicant named Chennamallu, in a large village called Gudur near to Masulipatam. This old mendicant, following the well-known example of Charles V., conceived the idea, which he carried into effect, of performing his own funeral obsequies. He was carried to the grave in the usual sedan chair like bier, and sat in the grave for a set time. Whilst being placed into the grave, he is said to have repeated a poem of his own composing, consisting of thirty-two stanzas. After returning from the grave, the old ascetic duly performed his own Shrāddhas for a full year; at the end of which, after the final monthly Shrāddha, he died, and a tomb was built over his grave. This story must be true for there is the tomb to this day! The Jangams, since that time, have adopted the custom of repeating these thirty-two stanzas at the burial of their dead, on placing the body in the grave. The ground is sloped in a kind of zigzag down into the grave, and the body is moved a little down the slope, at the repetition by the Purōhita of each stanza of the poem; at the thirty-second stanza the body is placed fairly into its position in the grave. It may be interesting to give a translation of one stanza of this poem as an example; it is in Telugu, and is called Chennamallu Seesam :—

By the grace and favour of the divine guru, I have been permitted to worship the gurus.

Through the favour of the gurus, I have obtained divine sustenance and happiness.

By their wisdom and favour I have attained to complete devotion (*bhakti*).

By enjoying the happiness of complete devotion I have attained to salvation.
(Oh my soul)! for the future there will be nothing lacking unto thee.
Oh Chennamallu! than humbly serving God with singing, and music,
And praising, and commending other things,
There are no other means of obtaining great benefit.

When the body has been placed in the grave, earth is put in up to about the waist. The *Kartŭ*, or chief mourner, then takes the Lingam of the deceased out of its receptacle—which is usually a kind of silver sarcophagus, suspended from the neck—and having bathed and worshipped it, he places it in the left hand of the dead person, where it is allowed to remain, to be buried with the body. The priest then repeats a mantram, the Karta joining in with him, during which he, the Karta, takes up a handful of earth and throws it into the grave. This answers to the setting fire to the pile in the case of those who practice cremation. The mantram thus repeated is as follows :—

शिवसायुज्यं गच्छ ॥

Become united with Siva.

It is said that the skull of the deceased person is now broken by a blow given with a cocoanut, so as to facilitate the escape of the soul from the body through the aperture, I am assured, however, by those who bury, that this is not the case; it being only a bit of slander on the part of their adversaries. In the case of Sanyasis, it seems, however, that this is actually done, why in this case only, it is not easy to make out. After the mantram, the friends present also throw in handfuls of earth, and finally they fill up the grave, and raise a low mound over it. In the middle of this mound they form with mud the shape of a Lingam, and at each of the four corners a rough model of a bull. The bull (*nandi*) is sacred to Siva, this being his vehicle.

These they all worship, and then disperse—bathing on their way home in some convenient tank or river. Those of the Lingadharis who wear the sacred thread, before leaving the grave cook some rice, and give it to the cows to eat, if any are near, or, failing them, they throw it into a river or tank. On reaching home they place a lighted lamp on the spot where the deceased breathed his last, and then the chief mourner and the Purōhita, with several friends, partake of a meal in company. For the ten days succeeding the funeral, the Karta with the Purōhita and friends proceed daily to the grave for worship. They worship the Lingam and the bulls which have been made on the grave, as above, by sprinkling them with *Vibūthi* mixed with water, and scattering over them flowers and coloured rice, as well as bits of cocoanut and sugar, at the same time repeating the thousand names of Siva and various mantrams. Vibuthi, it will be remembered, is the gray colouring material with which Saivites make the sacred marks on their person. On the tenth and final day, the earthen emblems of the Lingam and the bulls are levelled on the mound, and thus caused to disappear. Sometimes, if the friends can afford it, they will build a kind of monument over the grave, as those who burn their dead sometimes do near the place of cremation. They may also have a small bull made of stone, and place it on the grave as a monument. The following is a specimen of the mantrams thus said at the grave on these daily visits; it is said to be taken from the Skānda Purāna:—

गमागमस्थं गमनादिशून्यं
चिद्रूपदीपं तिमिरापहारं ।
यप्रोच्यते सर्वजनात्मसंस्थं
नमामि हंसं परिपूर्णरूपं ॥

I adore him (Siva) who sits immoveable in the universe,
Whose wisdom shines as a light dispelling darkness,
Who dwells in the hearts of all,
And who fills all things, the all wise.

विश्वव्यापिमनादिमेकममलं नित्यं परं निष्कलं
नित्यादृष्टसहस्रपत्रकमलैर्दिव्याक्षतैर्मंडितं ।
नित्यानंदमनंतरूपखचितं स्वांगेस्फुरन्मामके
सत्यात्मानमणुप्रमाणमिह तं स्वच्छंदरूपं भजे ॥

I adore him who fills the universe, who is without beginning,
Solitary, pure, eternal, above all, without parts or passions.
Who is worshipped with thousands of lotus-petals and rice procured by me.
Who, eternally happy, pervades all things shining in my soul with unbounded beauty.
Whose nature is truth, who being invisible can assume any form, the Supreme God.

When a member of a sect accustomed to burn its dead dies of small-pox, and is therefore buried, a curious custom is followed in order to give peace to the spirit of the deceased. Two months after the burial, or sometimes immediately after, the friends take a small branch of the Ravi tree (*Ficus religiosa*), or of the Zuvvi tree (*Ficus infectoria*), or of the Moduga tree (*Butea frondosa,*) and treat this bit of stick as though it were the deceased. By virtue of certain mantrams, the stick is supposed to become the actual dead body, and it is treated exactly as the body would have been had it been cremated. It is bathed and burnt, water and food are offered to the *Prēta* (spirit), and all the ceremonies, for ten days, are gone through, just as would have been the case had the deceased died and been burnt in the ordinary way.

It may be asked what is done in the case of the very poor; or in the case of a stranger dying? In such cases who performs the funeral ceremonies, and the burning or burying, as the case may be? This is not done by the public authorities, as in Europe, but Hinduism has provided for the emergency in another way. On the occasion of a death, not only is the whole household ceremonially impure, but the

immediate neighbours, also, are unclean until the dead body is removed. Under such circumstances, no food can be cooked or eaten; hence it is politic, nay necessary, for the neighbours to see to the speedy and proper disposal of the remains. Under circumstances, therefore, calling for such action, the neighbours are forced to attend to the matter, though probably the ceremonies are not performed so minutely or carefully as usual.

The ancient law-givers have also provided for various emergencies that may arise; for instance, in the case of a soldier dying in battle it would be impossible for all the ceremonies to be gone through. All know the summary way in which the dead are disposed of on the battle field. Here, then, there is a special rule to provide for such a contingency:—

By a soldier discharing the duties of his class, and slain in the field with brandished weapons, the highest sacrifice is, in that instant, complete; and so is his purification. This law is fixed. (Manu v. 78.)

In the preceding chapter the custom was mentioned of devoting a young bull, as a kind of scape-goat, by those who practise cremation. Those who bury their dead never do this; but they sometimes give a cow with its calf to the priest, as also do the crematists. This gift is called *Gōdānam*, or the cow offering.

We now come to deal with the most important subject of *Shrāddhas*, or periodical ceremonies for deceased ancestors. These ceremonies are a manifestation of that ancestral worship which is seen, in some form or other, as a part of so many of the various religions of mankind. We see this as forming a very large portion of the religious ceremonies of the Chinese, for instance; but really and truly, it takes quite as important a place in Hinduism, although it may manifest itself in a somewhat different form. Those who practise cremation are the more minute in their ancestral worship rites; but those who bury, also, have some ceremonies of the kind, though differing in detail and in degree. A learned Hindu professor is quoted as having said, in one of a series of lectures, that:—"Ancestor-worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu

religion." (*Bhattacharjya* in Tagore lectures). The object of the Hindu Shrāddhas is to assist the departed spirit through the various experiences it will have to pass; and at the same time, the one who duly performs these rites and ceremonies, thereby lays up merit for himself and his family, which merit will be duly carried to the credit of the account hereafter to be adjudicated upon.

The first of these ceremonies is the *Nitya karma* already described in the previous chapter as occupying the ten days after the funeral. This is called *Prētā Shrāddha,* and is not perhaps a Shrāddha proper, as ordinarily understood, hence it was dealt with as being more in connection with the funeral rites themselves. The object of the Nitya karma ceremonies is to provide the departed spirit with an intermediate body. The spirit at death leaves its former dwelling place in an amorphous, invisible form, about the size of one's thumb (*Angushtha Mātra*). This is called a *Prēta,* and were it not for the prescribed ceremonies, this spirit would simply wander about for ever as an impure ghost or goblin, amongst kindred demons and departed evil spirits. By means of the Nitya Karma rites the Prēta is furnished with an intermediate kind of body which enables it to feel the sensations of happiness or misery, and thus be in a position to undergo the punishment, or enjoy the good that may be its due.

On the twelfth day after the death there must be the ceremony called *Sapindi Karanam,* or the mixing together of the lumps, which is a great factor in this desired change of form and nature of the Prēta. It appears that in some parts this ceremony is performed on the eleventh day; but, as far as I can gather, it is always done on the twelfth day in the Circars, and probably in South India generally. On the morning of the day in question, there is a large gathering of Brahmins and friends and relatives at the house of the deceased. It must be noted that it is supposed whatever nourishes the Brahmins fed on these occasions, and who represent the departed spirits, also nourishes and helps the spirits themselves. Thus the Brahmins are fed and well treated vicariously. There must

be seven Brahmins specially called for this ceremony. In the case of the ordinary Shrāddhas, to be described later on, there need be only two or three such. To these is given the name of *Bhōktas*, or those who eat or enjoy. The seven called for the Sapindi rite are said to be:—one to represent Vishnu, two the Vishvadēvas (a kind of deities that presides over Shrāddhas), three the deceased's immediate three ancestors, and one to represent the Prēta. The two called for ordinary Shrāddha rites are said to be:—one to represent the Vishva dēvas and one the spirit of the deceased. It is not always easy to get fit and proper Brahmins for these rites, and they must be rewarded for coming. The food they vicariously eat on these occasions is supposed to defile; and it necessitates purificatory ceremonies of rather a severe nature. An old pundit friend assured me that, though he used often to go to such ceremonies, it was always against his desire; but that it would be sinful not to respond to the appeal for help of the Karta. A Brahmin to be fit for this duty should be over sixteen years of age, and should have both parents still living; probably because in the event of his parents being dead he might have to be a Karta on his own account; he also, according to Manu, should be a man of light and learning:—

> Food, consecrated to the gods and the manes, must be presented to a theologian of eminent learning; for certainly, when hands are smeared with blood, they cannot be cleaned with blood only, nor can sin be removed by the company of sinners.
>
> As many mouthfuls as an unlearned man shall swallow at an oblation to the gods, and to ancestors, so many red hot iron balls must the giver of the Shrāddha swallow in the next world. (iii. 132, 133).

The Sapindi rite may be described as follows; it may be here stated that this rite is performed on or near the spot where the deceased breathed his last. When the Bhōktas are seated, and before the food for the meal is served, four vessels made of leaves are placed, three in front of those who represent the three

immediate ancestors, and one in front of the representative of the deceased. The Karta, having poured water into these vessels, takes that which is for the deceased, and at the repeating of a mantram, pours some of the water from it into the other three vessels. This is supposed to indicate the union of the spirit of the deceased with those of the immediate ancestors. After this ceremony, the food is placed before the Bhōktas who proceed to partake of the same. Whilst they are thus eating, the Karta prepares four large lumps of the boiled rice with the various condiments and other accessories that form the meal of the Bhōktas. One of these lumps he rolls up into a cylindrical shape which he places side by side with the other three lumps in front of those assembled. The cylindrical mass is supposed to represent the deceased, and the three lumps his three immediate ancestors—father, grandfather, and great grandfather. The mass representing the deceased is then divided by the Karta into three portions, one of each of which is mixed with one of the three balls; during this operation various mantrams are said. The three balls are then taken by the Karta and thrown into water—a river, a tank or well. By this rite the *Prēta*, or goblin, or impure spirit stage of existence is supposed to pass away, and the soul of the deceased becomes a *Pita*, that is, one invested with a kind of ethereal body, and admitted to the company of the semi-divine ancestral fathers. By this Sapindi ceremony, also, the spirit of the great grandfather is supposed to be elevated into a condition so as no longer to require the ceremonies of its relatives, so for him they henceforth cease. The following is a specimen of the mantrams said at the Sapindikaranam :—

मधुवाता ऋतायते ।

मधुक्षरंति सिंधवः ।

माध्वीर्नसंत्वोषधीः ।

मधुनक्तमुतोषसि ।

मधुमत्पर्थिवंरजः ।
मधुद्यौरस्तुनःपिता ।
मधुमान्नो वनस्पतिः ।
मधुमानस्तु सूर्यः ।
माध्वीर्गावो भवंतुनः ॥
सं ग च्छध्वं सं वदध्वं ॥

May the winds become sweet and true!
May the rivers give out sweetness!
May the standing corn be full of honey for us!
May day and night become sweet.
May the abundance of the earth become sweet!
May the skies become sweet for us!
May our father possess sweetness!
May our trees drop with honey!
May the sun give us sweet things!
May cows supply us with sweet milk!
Be pleased to depart! Let it be so!

We now enter upon a subject, with reference to which there are very divided, and in some cases, very vague ideas current amongst Hindus of the present day. By some it seems to be supposed that by the due observance of the rites already mentioned, the Pita passes at once beyond the reach of *Yama*, the genius of death and judge of departed spirits, into the ancestral heaven (*pitrulōkam*), there to remain until the end of the age, when it will become absorbed into the divine essence. That is to say, by the ceremonies of the survivors, rightly performed, not only will there be no punishment in hell, but also there will be no rebirths—all this will be escaped. According to this notion, it will be observed, a man's future condition is not made to depend so much upon his own good or evil deeds, as upon the faithfulness with which the survivors perform stated ceremonies. It does not require much effort to show how entirely subversive such an idea as this must be, of all inducements to

morality. Others again, in accordance with the Vedanta philosophy, maintain what may be called the orthodox doctrine, which with various modifications is the belief of the mass of Hindus. This belief is that upon attaining the Pita state of existence, the spirit departs on its journey to Yama to receive its doom according to its deeds done in the body. The temporary hell (*pāpalōkam* or *yamalōkam*), or the temporary heaven (*punyalōkam* or *svargam*) to which it may be consigned will be its abode until it has received in either state the reward that is its due. At the end of this period, whether long or short, the spirit will be reborn into some other state, again to commence the weary round of existence from which it would fain be released. Those pious souls, however, who have in their passage through their various states of existence attained into *Gnānam* (true wisdom) will pass straight to *Brahma-lōkam* (the heaven of Brahma) there to remain in the enjoyment of heavenly bliss until the end of the age (*pralāyam*), when they will be elevated to *Nirvāna* (mōksham), that is absorption into the supreme essence; which consummation is the end and aim of every pious Hindu. It seems to be the object of the Shrāddhas to assist the spirits of those intended in their course to other worlds, and at their dreadful trial before Yama, as well as to support them and further their development in the state of being in which they may be doomed to exist, hastening their passage through the same. For *Sanyāsis* or Holy Hermits no Nityakarmas or any other rites are required; the souls of such do not become Prētās but pass at once on leaving the body into the Pita stage and proceed straight to Brahmalōkam. For these therefore no ceremonies or Shrāddhas are necessary. To such only worship is paid as though they were divine. There is much that is very complex and conflicting in the various schools of thought as to the future state, and the benefit of ancestral ceremonies; but the above seems to me to give in brief a sufficient outline to answer our present purpose. It must be borne in mind, as has before been mentioned, that it is not intended in these pages to give an account of Hinduism as a religion, but rather to present some

more or less popular sketches of every day Hindu life and thought.

Although the Sapindi karanam and the Nityakarma are Shrāddhas of a kind, the first Shrāddha proper is performed on the twelfth day, that is sometime during the day on the morning of which the Sapindi rite has been observed. This is called *Māsika* or monthly Shrāddha, and it is the commencement of those which are performed every month for the first year, on the thirtieth day after the death. These monthly ceremonies are very much like the Sapindi rite, except that there will be only two or three Bhōktas, and there will only be the three lumps of rice and condiments without the long cylindrical roll. Very minute directions are given in Manu as to the performance of these rites. They must never be done at night, but always in the day time:—

Obsequies must not be performed by night; since the night is called rācshasi or infested by demons; nor whilst the sun is rising or setting, nor when it has just risen. (III. 280.)

The Karta must treat the Bhōktas respectfully, and he must urge them to eat the various dishes provided:—

Then being duly purified and with perfect presence of mind let him take up all the dishes, one by one, and present them in order to the Brahmans, proclaiming their qualities (III. 228)

He must be very cautious how he moves about and also be careful of his feelings as well as repress any emotion, or he may by carelessness or by his tears, cause disaster instead of benefit to those for whom he is performing the ceremony:—

Let him at no time drop a tear; let him on no account be angry; let him say nothing false; let him not touch the eatables with his foot; let him not even shake the dishes:

A tear sends the messes to restless ghosts; anger, to foes; falsehood, to dogs; contact with his foot, to demons; agitation to sinners (iii. 229, 230).

He must be careful how he disposes of any food that may be left from this ceremonial meal, and not dispose of it in the manner of ordinary food :—

Thus having ended the Shrāddha, let him cause a cow, a priest, a kid, or the fire, to devour what remains of the cakes; or let him cast them into the waters (iii. 260).

Dire will be the punishment upon those who instead of disposing of the remains of the feast in the manner above prescribed, should given them to a low caste man to eat :—

That fool, who having eaten of the Shrāddha, gives the residue of it to a man of the servile class, falls headlong down to the hell named Cālasūtra (iii. 240).

The ordinary Shrāddah ceremony may be thus described. Two or three Bhōktas with the Purōhita come to the house by invitation, and they are duly seated in the usual place for such proceedings. At these Shrāddhas the Bhōktas and Purōhita sit in the sacred kitchen-dining room. If there are two guests, one sits facing the North, and the other facing the East. If there should be a third, he will sit looking towards the South. The Karta having duly bathed performs a Hōmam sacrifice in presence of the guests, and then seating himself opposite to them, recites the names of the century, the year, the month, and the day (*Sankalpam*) and the names of the two sacred rivers between which the place is situated in which they happen to be. In the case of Masulipatam, it would be the Kistna and the Godavery. He then proceeds to wash their feet and wipe them, after sprinkling some of the water on his own head with darbha grass. After this he worships the guests, scattering over them darbha, sesamum seeds, raw rice and sandalwood paste, looking upon them as though they were actually his deceased ancestors and performing the same worship to them as he does to his gods. Another sacrifice by fire is then performed into which is cast some of the food that has been specially prepared for the occasion. The remainder is then served out to the guests, but

the chief performer or Karta must not partake of it. In ancient times certain kinds of flesh used to be eaten on these occasions; but now this is replaced by a kind of grain. After the meal the guests are asked whether they have eaten heartily, and they must answer in the affirmative. The question asked is as follows with the answer :—

पितृपितामहप्रपितामहाः तृप्ताःस्थ तृप्ताःस्थ तृप्ताःस्मः ॥

O my father! my grandfather! my great grandfather! Are you satisfied? Are you satisfied? We are satisfied.

Whilst the Bhōktas have been eating the Karta has been making three large lumps of rice and condiments from the various eatables, and after they have finished eating he proceeds to worship the lumps in the same way as he has before worshipped the guests. The worship finished he takes a grain of the rice, and repeating a mantram puts it into his mouth. The lumps which represent the deceased ancestors for the three preceding generations are given to a cow to eat, or failing that, they are burnt or buried or thrown into some deep river, or tank, or well, whichever may be most convenient. The Karta after worshipping the lumps, gets a little cooked rice in a leaf and pours some water upon it. He then sprinkles this on the floor around the leaf-plate of one of the Bhōktas, saying at the same time, the following Slôkam :—

असंस्कृत प्रमीता ये
महाकन्याः कुलस्त्रियः ।
दास्यामि तेभ्यो विकिर
मन्नं ताभ्यश्च पैतृकं ॥

Whoever has died without the sacraments,
Whether man virgin or woman, of my tribe
For them this food I give;
For them this is a Shrāddha.

After this, the Karta takes a small portion of the rice and placing it before each of the Bhōktas says the following mantram. This is for the benefit of any ancestors who may have been accidentally killed by fire or water; and who perhaps may not have had the necessary ceremonies duly performed owing to the accompanying circumstances :—

तोयेच ॥

ये अग्निदग्धाः येऽनग्नि दग्धाः
यावा जाताः कुले मम ।
भूमौ दत्तेन पिंडेन
तृप्ता यांतु परां गतिं ॥

Whoever has perished in water or by fire,
Of those born in my family,
By this food which is now given on earth,
May they be satisfied and attain to heaven (punyalōkam).

The ceremony being now complete the Bhōktas are presented with betel and the fee for their services, after which they take their departure. It is the rule that these guests take no more food on that day, nor must they do anything or touch anything that would cause ceremonial defilement. Before leaving the house the guests pronounce the following blessing. This is quoted from Manu and the context in that book makes it appear as though the Karta should pronounce it :—

May generous givers abound in our house! May the scriptures be studied, and progeny increase in it! May faith never depart from us, and may we have much to bestow on the needy! (iii. 259).

Following upon this ceremonial feast, there is a feast given by the Karta to his friends and relatives as well as to many Brahmins; and also presents are distributed to them of money, and cloths, or copper and

brass vessels and the like. On the following day a similar feast is given to lowest caste neighbours and the poor; these also expect presents from their host.

This concludes the first monthly Shrāddha; upon its repetition on every thirtieth day there is only the ceremonial feast for the Bhōktas, but no general feasting.

At the end of the year there is a good deal of feasting according to the means of the family, as at the first monthly Shrāddha, to mark the termination of the monthly ceremonies. And afterwards there is the annual ceremony performed on the anniversary of the death all being done in much the same way as above described.

What has been written above applies to Brahmins. The Sudras follow the same ritual to a certain extent, but there are these exceptions. The three chief guests are Brahmins, one of whom is the Purōhita. The feeding of these is not done on the spot, as they could not eat food cooked by Sudras; provisions are given to them which they take away and cook and eat by themselves. It is imperative that the very articles thus given be actually cooked and eaten by them. After the ceremonies have been duly performed in presence of the Brahmins and they have taken their departure, the Sudra Karta sits down with near relatives who have been previously invited, to partake of a meal in honour of the dead. It may be noted that although Sudras usually eat meat and fish, at this meal it is only the Vaishnavas who partake of flesh; the others make a point of having no meat whatever at this particular time.

These annual ceremonies, differing somewhat in form, are performed for both sexes by Hindus of every caste and sect. It is for the due performance of the funeral and annual ceremonies, that a Hindu longs so earnestly for a son. If a man dies having no male issue, his soul must suffer accordingly. Hence it is that if a man's wife bears him no son, he must either marry another wife or adopt a boy. The latter is what is usually done, and adoption has thus become an important institution amongst Hindus.

In addition to what may be called the ordinary Shrāddhas, when opportunity offers and there is the ability to take advantage of the same, extra Shrāddhas are performed at sacred rivers, and at such holy places as Rāmēshvaram, Srirangam, Kumbakonam and others in the south, and Benāres, Allahabad, Gayā and others in the north; but for these ceremonies (*pitrukāryam*) no places appear to be so beneficial as Gayā and its neighbourhood. Great merit is attached to the performance of the ceremonies at any such places, but the efficacy of those at Gayā is such that, when fully and properly performed, the spirits of the departed relatives for whom the observances are made, no matter at what stage of existence they may be, are at once admitted to the heaven of Vishnu—the highest heaven (*Vaikuntha*).

Besides the ceremonies above described, there are also daily observances partaking of the same nature. Each day the Karta or head of the household, at the time of going through his daily devotions, pours out water to the manes of his ancestors mentioning them as he does so. This is called *Tarpanam*, or a drink offering. He also does the same just before partaking of his food—making an oblation or offering of water to his forefathers. It will be thus seen how large a share ancestral worship has in the religion of the Hindu.

Although these chapters on Hindu Funerals have occupied much space, it must be observed that there are many details that have not been touched upon at all. Various and manifold items have not been described; there may also be much difference in detail in different parts of the country. Enough, however, has been explained to give a fair idea of what is done, and to show the truth of the saying that the Hindus are a very religious people.

We might dwell upon the grievous expense that these observances involve, wasting the substance of the bereaved and often loading them with debt. There is no greater cause of financial misery in Hindu families that the expenses at marriages and funerals. In the case of wealthy men the burden is a great

one; but in ordinary cases the funds have to be obtained from the money lender at an exorbitant rate of interest, loading the poor victims with a life long burden of debt. So manifest is the evil that, according to the newspapers, high personages connected with the Indian government have for some time had under consideration means for mitigating the evil. The custom is, however, so deeply rooted and the Hindus are so thoroughly conservative, it seems barely possible for any thing effectual to be done. The amelioration of matters of this kind amongst such a people can only be effected by the gradual growth of public opinion in the right direction; and any change of opinion, sufficient to be felt, must occupy a very long time in its formation.

To the Christian well wisher of India it is touching to see a people thus groping after pardon for sin and happiness beyond the grave; striving to obtain by a slavish adherence to the letter of a dead law, what can only be obtained through that only "name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Very different indeed are all the vague longings of the Hindu from the bright hopes of the Christian, and great is the contrast between the mantrams repeated at a Hindu funeral and the comforting words used at the graveside of one who is committed to the earth :—

> "In sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through Our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

# CHAPTER XVIII.

# UNORTHODOX HINDU FUNERALS

## अधर्मोत्तरक्रिय. (Adharmottara Kriya.)

The *Ayōgava* the *Cshattri* and the *Chandāla,* the lowest of men, spring from a *Sudra* in an inverse order of the classes, and are therefore, all three excluded from the performance of obsequies to their ancestors (Manu. x 16.)

Manu gives as the origin of the debased classes irregular intercourse between members of the four castes, and again the intermingling of the despicable offspring resulting from such irregularities. (x. 5—40) During the life time of such they must exist in a most abject condition, living apart from the upper castes in mountains, or groves, or places for burning the dead—anywhere outside of the towns inhabited by their superiors (x. 50—51). Their clothing, and food, and general surroundings, must be of the most miserable nature, and their occupation should be of the most degrading character. (x. 50—56). Not only so, but even after death the curse of their birth must follow them; and, as is seen from the quotation at the head of this chapter, the poor unfortunates are not to have even the consolation of funeral obsequies for their dead.

All that has been said in the preceding chapters about funeral rites and periodical Shrāddhas, have only to do with the four castes, and particularly with the three higher ones; but the non-castes or out-castes are not supposed to have anything to do with such things. Although this is the case, as a matter of fact, just as the material and social position of the non-castes is far better than the Brahminical Law-givers would have it be, and than what they legislate it should and ought to be, so in the matter of their dead, these non-caste people do perform certain funeral rites and they also have Shrāddha ceremonies of a kind. It is not, however, very clear with what object these perform the various ceremonies. They have in view,

probably, to a certain extent, the spiritual good of the departed; but their ideas on this head appear to be very confused and uncertain. The motive that seems to actuate them in a large measure is fear; it is thought well to treat kindly the departed spirit and divert its attention so as to prevent its inflicting any injury on the living. In fact these observances seem to be a survival of ancient Dravidian rites tinged, at the same time, with an admixture of Hinduism. Our attention will, however, be again directed to this aspect of the subject at the close of this description. It is only necessary to say now that these remarks may also be said to describe the ideas on this subject of the lower class Sudras, particularly the ordinary village ryots.

As was done in the chapter on Unorthodox Marriages, it may be well here also to take the Mālas or Telugu Pariahs as representative of the middle line between Hindus proper and the lowest Pagans. The funeral rites of the Mālas will do well to represent, generally, those of the classes here intended, and the chapter may be concluded with some brief notices of pure Pagan observances.

The Mālas may be said, as a rule, to burn their dead; but though this is considered amongst them as the more respectable, there are very many exceptions to the rule. There are some sections of this class who always bury, and very many who would cremate if they could afford it, but who are driven by poverty to the less expensive method of disposing of their dead. There seems to be a general notion, however, amongst these latter, that the soul of the deceased, somehow, suffers on account of such a departure from custom. Children and small-pox victims are buried amongst these as with the caste people. In times of pestilence too, as when cholera is prevalent, they bury; as a rule this is merely from being generally panic stricken, or from the difficulty resulting from fear of contagion to get any help from the neighbours. At such times the dead are often disposed of in a very summary way as may be mentioned hereafter.

When a person is seen to be near death, there do not appear to be any religious rites or ceremonies whatever amongst these people. They, however, follow out the customs alluded to in a former Chapter of taking the dying person outside the house so as to prevent possible pollution to the dwelling place. Should the household ascertain from the Dāsari (*the Pariah priest*) that the day is a lucky one, they will suffer the patient to die in the house; otherwise, they are as particular as the upper castes in putting the sufferer outside to die. It must be borne in mind that amongst Hindus, in the event of a person dying inside the house during an unlucky conjunction of the stars, not only must that particluar household vacate the dwelling for a period of time, but also the neighbours must do the same; hence public opinion is very strong in the matter of suffering any one to die inside a house. It must be very trying, particularly if it should be the rainy season, to have to turn out of one's house and live, perhaps, in some temporary shed, and this, may be, for some months.

The dying person is placed on the ground to die, as in the case of the higher castes. Should the poor sufferer seem to be a long time in dying, there is a cruel custom which seems to be practised by the upper castes too; it is thought that from excessive love for some one, the husband for the wife, or the wife for the husband, or the parents for a child, as the case may be, the spirit is loth to quit the body. If it is thought that this is the case, a little water or some other liquid is poured into the mouth by the one supposed to be thus excessively loved, or perhaps by several one after the other, and this operation probably soon settles the matter. If it should be thought that through an avaricious disposition the spirit is loth to depart, some coins are taken and washed in water, the water being then poured into the mouth of the dying person. It is not difficult to imagine how such a practice may often hasten death, sometimes, perhaps, even in cases where a recovery might otherwise have been possible.

Burial or cremation follow quickly upon death;

within three or four hours of the last breath there may be nothing left of the departed but a heap of ashes. When life as left the body it is bathed and treated to a certain extent like what has already been described in a previous chapter, only of course there are no mantrams or hōmams. The Dāsari, if present, may say a Slōkam or verse of some kind, but if he should not be present nothing is done by way of prayers; the body is merely dressed up and fastened to the bier.

Some of the Mālas are Vaishnavas of the Rāmānuja sect, and a few as Saivas; but the bulk of them are practically pagans—idolaters of a very low kind. In some things they appear to follow Hindu rites in a very feeble sort of way; but it is merely an apeing of what they see the higher castes do, and really and truly their religion, if they may be said to have any at all, seems to be a relic of ancient Dravidian idolatry just tinged with Hinduism, largely admixed with demonolatry. This latter class of Mālas take the dead person straight off to the burning ground or burying place and dispose of the body without any rites, except that the Karta will carry water three times round the pile and then throw it away, as already described. The Vaishnavas, however, offer a sacrifice before taking away the body. A fowl, or in some few cases of comparatively wealthy people, a sheep or a goat is killed and its blood allowed to drip on to the spot where the deceased breathed his last. At least a cocoanut will be broken over the spot and the water allowed there to drip, even by the very poorest who may not be able to procure a fowl. This is supposed, to satisfy the spirit just departed, and to keep it from harming any one near. The Karta also cooks some food of which the slain fowl will form a part, and a portion of this is offered to the deceased by touching the mouth with some of it three times. The portion thus offered is then thrown to the crows. Arrack also is poured into the poor dead mouth, all this to please the departed spirit. The rest of the food and arrack is then given to those who are to carry the bier—the Karta placing the food into their hands and giving them to drink of the arrack.

After this the body is fastened to the bier and borne to the cemetery. The Vaishnavas have a peculiar arrangement attached to the head of the bier, the reason for which is not easy to find out. Two sticks are tied across each other which again have cross pieces, the whole forming a kind of St. Helena cross. At three of the four ends of the projecting cross pieces a lime is fastened. This whole arrangement is fastened to one end of the bier so as to form a kind of canopy over the head of the corpse. This may have had its origin in serpent worship, and the idea may be the cobra with expanded hood swaying over the head. This possible explanation is only given for what it is worth, no other, however, suggests itself and the people themselves can give no reason for it. Other Vaishnavas than Mālas appear also to adopt this device. Four men carry the bier, and when the bearers lift up their burden they raised it up a little and then lower it again, doing this three times and each time crying out Nārāyana! or Gōvinda!—names of Vishnu and Krishna respectively. The bier is set down three times on the way to the cemetery, when on each end of the two main poles of the bier a coin is placed; these coins are taken up by the Dāsari as a perquisite. This ceremony of placing coins appears also to be done by the upper castes. Whilst it is on the ground some grain and saffron are scattered round the bier; the grain is afterwards eaten by the birds. Each time the bier is lifted up it is with the three upliftings and the shouts of Nārāyana! or Gōvinda! Some of the Mālas who bury place the body in the grave in a sitting position as before described, thus necessitating a peculiar shaped bier; ordinarily, however, the recumbent posture is observed. The funeral procession is much the same as with the orthodox Hindus—the Karta carrying the fire and there being, as a rule, no women following.

The Māla cemetery is always distinct and often at some considerable distance from that of the caste people; even in death there must be no contamination by too close proximity. The place is, if possible,

a more dreary and miserable spot still than that of the orthodox; the idea of paying any attention to keeping the cemetery tidy seems never to enter into the head of a Hindu.

The actual burning or burying details are, to a certain extent, the same as those already described in the case of the orthodox, except that there are no mantrams or hōmams. The body is carefully stripped before being put into the grave or on to the pile; and here we may but barely allude to a practice that appears to be prevalent amongst all Hindus of every class. In the case of the death of a pregnant woman, when the corpse is placed on the pile or just before putting it into the grave, a kind of rough Cæsarean operation is performed by the husband the details of which are too revolting to mention. This custom appears to be connected with the same idea as that which causes the body to be stripped quite naked. 'We brought nothing with us into this world and we must carry nothing out; each must depart, as he came.'

The Karta carries a pot of water round the pile three times before setting the fire alight, and then throws it over his shoulder as already described; in the case of those who bury, the water is carried round the grave. There seems to be little by way of ceremony of any kind—no prayers or slōkas are said, except that when the body is placed on the pile or into the grave the cry of Nārāyana! or Govinda! is raised. The grave is dug and the pile also placed so that the body shall lie with its head towards the south. This is a universal custom, and from it arises the idea that it is unlucky to sleep with the head towards the south. It may be mentioned that whilst some Hindus will not sleep with head to the south, others think it most unlucky to sleep with the head towards the north. The company all bathe after the funeral and that seems to finish the ceremonies for that day. The funeral group usually, it seems, repair to a drinking shop, there to drink arrack at the expense of the Karta. Nothing seems to be done at the house, except that the women clean up the place

generally after the funeral party have gone, purifying the place by smearing with cowdung and sprinkling with water in which that purifying substance has been mixed.

In the case of burial, for several nights afterwards a small fire of same kind is kept on the grave, even if it should only be a smouldering whisp of straw. This is to frighten off the jackals which might otherwise unearth the body—a precaution, however, which does not always prevent such a revolting thing taking place. It must be borne in mind that bodies are never put into coffins by Hindus, though some of the Christians who can afford it, especially in the towns, adopt the European fashion—using wooden or bamboo wicker basket coffins. In the villages, however, the Christians have few facilities for such refinements, and a winding sheet with, perhaps, an outer covering of matting supplies all that is really needful for decency and reverential regard for the dead. Sometimes when cholera or any other pestilence may be prevalent, or when, perhaps, any one happens to die whilst on a journey, the survivors may merely cast out the body to become a prey to the vultures and jackals. The neighbourhood of the Hindu burying ground often presents sights that are very repulsive to the eye of one unaccustomed to such things; and the anatomical student need not be at much trouble, especially in out of the way up-country parts, to get specimens for the osteological branch of his studies.

We now came to those funeral obsequies which, in a measure, represent the *Nityakarma* and *Sapindi* rites of the Brahminical religion. There are two such ceremonies amongst the Mālas, called in Telugu the Chinnadinamu (చిన్నదినము) and the Peddadinamu (పెద్ద దినము) or the little day, and the big, or important day. The former of these may possibly be observed on the very day of the funeral, or on the third or fifth day afterwards; it is generally on the fifth day. The day fixed upon will depend upon the position of certain stars, which matter is decided

by the Dāsari. It can never be on an even day, as odd numbers are lucky whilst even days are unlucky. The Peddadinamu is always observed the fifteenth day after the death. Until the Chinnadinamu rite has been performed it is proper for the Karta to take his food sitting on the spot where the death actually took place; also it is usual to place a light there each night, until that rite has been performed.

Amongst the Mālas there is a very peculiar division into those who perform funeral observances in the day time, and those who only do so at night. According to the Brahminical religion, as has already been seen, no such observances should take place at night at all, and it is curious how this night observing sect sprung into existence. Those who observe these rites in the day time are called in Telugu *Pakshivēsēvāru* (పక్షివేసేవారు) or those who throw to the birds—the reason for this will be seen further on. Those who observe in the night time are called *Tirupallivāru* (తిరుపల్లివారు.) It is not clear what this word means, but it is of Tamil origin and comes from a word meaning a tomb. Although these two divisions are very distinct amongst the Mālas, it does not appear to manifest itself in any other way than in the differences in the observances of those funeral rites. This distinction also appears to exist amongst some other sections of the community.

On the day fixed upon by the Dāsari for the Chinnadinamu, there is a gathering of friends at the house of the deceased. The observances amongst the two sections are very much the same for this rite, except that the one begin theirs in the morning and perform them during the day, whilst the other begin theirs in the evening and carry them on through the night. It will be pointed out where the usages of the Day-observers differ from those of the Night-observers.

The Dāsari and a few friends assemble at the house of the deceased; the whole dwelling has been previously cleaned up by the women of the house and the floors well smeared over with the all purifying

mixture of cowdung and water. The Dāsari takes a vessel of water and with a bunch of leaves proceeds to sprinkle the people present and the room in which they are congregated, repeating at the same time various names of Vishnu and the *Sankalpam*, which has several times been described as being a declaration of the place, time, tribe, and name &c.—including also a prayer for pardon for sin. He then prepares a place on the earth near the spot where the death took place, and with white powder draws a cabalistic figure formed of two parallel lines drawn at right angles across two other parallel lines, the ends of the four lines being all joined together by cross lines. This is called *Ashtāksharam* or the eight figures. Near this figure is placed a heap of rice which rice is a perquisite of the Dāsari who is said to grumble much if the heap should not be as large as he would like. Upon this heap are placed certain figures brought by the Dāsari and called in Telugu Perumāllu (పెరుమాళ్లు); these are said to represent the gods and their retinue. The Karta slays a fowl or perhaps a sheep over the spot, as was done on the day of the funeral; and this is given to the women of the household to cook. When the rice and curries have been duly prepared a portion is placed near the Pirumāllu, and another portion is placed into vessels which the Dāsari and Karta, with a few friends take to the cemetery.

On arriving at the cemetery, if they are Night-observers, the group proceed to gather together the ashes of the funeral pile and pour water upon them—the whole being flattened down and made smooth. In the case of those who bury, the top of the grave is thus prepared. A leaf-plate is put on the prepared place and the food brought is laid upon it. The Dāsari then places on a separate leaf three lumps of the food; this is supposed to be for the departed spirit. This portion is eaten by the Karta; the remainder is divided by the Dāsari amongst the others present who forthwith eat it and a little arrack is also given them to drink. On thus dividing the food, the Dāsari

in the name of the Kartā says words to the following effect :—

As this departed spirit has committed sins, it cannot appear before god; therefore these ceremonies are performed in the hope that it may thereby be fitted to enter heaven.

One need scarcely point out how much this ceremony resembles the feeding of the Bhōktās by the orthodox; it is probably a kind of imitation of the same. In the case of the Day-observers, the food is placed on the spot where the cremation took place or on the grave, but those present do not eat of it; they simply place it there and go away a little distance to allow the crows and other birds to come and take it. When the birds have once begun to eat the food thus placed, the party are satisfied and take their departure. On placing the food the Dāsari says words to the following effect, instead of what has been quoted above as said for the Night-observers :—

O Nārāyana who bearest the conch shell, the wheel and the club, I make namaskāram to thee. Grant that by the giving of this food this spirit may be satisfied.

Amongst this section, each day from the funeral to the Chinnadinamu the Kartā before he partakes of his meals places a portion of his food on the house to attract the birds, and until some bird or other has begun to eat what is thus placed he does not taste his meal. This must be very tautalizing to a hungry man, especially if there should happen to be no birds in the neighbourhood. The Indian crow, however, is ubiquitons and it really seems to know untuitively when any thing of the kind is going on by which it can get something wherewith to satisfy its rapacious, omnivorous appetite. It will be seen from the above why this section are called Pakshivēsēvārn or those who throw to the birds.

After this ceremony a small feast is prepared at the house and partaken of by the Dāsari and a few friends; but especially the Dāsari, who must be well fed and who also must have an extra liberal share of

the arrack provided for the feast. After the meal it is customary for the Dāsari to make a kind of funeral oration in which he sets forth the good qualities of the deceased.

Nothing further is done until the fifteenth day upon which the most important ceremonies are performed, answering perhaps to a certain extent to the Sapindi rites of the orthodox. The ceremonies on this day are very different amongst the two sections of these people. In the case of Night-observers, the Dāsari and friends assemble at the house of the deceased, when the Karta and the friends and relatives of the deceased who are of the same surname (*house-name*) all shave, both head and face; the Karta having also his moustache shaven off, and in some cases even the Zuttu (sikha). The killing of the fowl or sheep, and the ceremony of the Ashtākesharam are all gone through as on the Chinnadinamu, except that there is no visit paid to the cemetery. As a much large number of people gather together for this ceremony a pig may possibly be killed, especially in the Kistna District, so as to provide a sufficient and savory dish for the feast; on this occasion there is feasting and drinking as at a great wedding feast.

Sometime after sun down, the Dāsari proceeds to tie together with same sticks a contrivance about two or three feet high. Cross pieces are also tied so as to make two little platforms inside, one of which is for a lamp. Some cotton cloth is tied round the upper part of this arrangement so as to form a shelter for the lamp, and also to make it look like a little shrine. The name given to this in Telugu is Tritēru (త్రితేరు) or the three storied car. A light is placed inside this shrine and it is taken up by the Dāsari who accompanied by the assembled friends both male and female, and strumming on his guitar like instrument, proceeds singing a kind of song to some place near an adjacent main road. A specimen of the songs thus sung supplied by a Dāsari is nothing but a meaningless sort of thing referring to Rāma, in a pantheistic

way as being all things and pervading all things; there is in it no allusion whatever to the ceremony itself or anything connected with it. Arrived at a suitable spot they all sit down round the lighted up temporary shrine and the Dāsari repeats some verses, during which recitation the men and women come up to him one by one to allow of his touching their foreheads with some coloured rice—each one thus coming up gives a fee to the priest, perhaps a copper coin of small value.

After this ceremony has been gone through, if the one who died were a man leaving a widow, the rite of declaring her widowhood is then performed. The Dāsari and several relatives, male and female, take the widow apart to some adjacent place, probably the bank of the village tank, where the Dāsari repeating some kind of slōkam cuts the Mangalasūtram off the widow's neck and breaks the glass bangles from her wrists, putting on her a pair of brass bracelets which have been brought for the purpose and which amongst these people are a sign of widowhood. The head of the Māla widow is not shaven, and she is at liberty to marry again if opportunity should offer. A new cloth is produced which is thrown over the head of the widow, and then blindfolded she is led back to the group around the Tritēru. During the whole of this operation there is much weeping and wailing by the women assembled. If the deceased person should be a woman, her husband is taken aside in the same way and his loin-cord is cut off with some little ceremony. This loin-cord is a very important part of the male belongings, being as it is the main stay of the chief portion of a man's attire; it is not easy, however, to imagine the meaning of this ceremony. The following is a free rendering of what the Dāsari repeats when cutting off the Mangalasūtram from the widow, or the loin-cord from the man. This is said to be a quotation from the Bhagavatgīta; at any rate there does not seem to be much connection between the words and the circumstances:—

I (god) am the destroyer of all diseases; I absolve thee from such sins as the killing of infants, of women, of Brah-

mins, and of cows, the causing abortions, of drunkenness, stealing of gold, adultery, robbery, slander and the like. Do not lament.

On returning to the group around the little shrine there is usually much drinking of arrack, after which the assembly repairs to the house for a big feast. The relatives make it a point of honour to show respect or affection to the memory of the deceased, by each one bringing a portion of arrack to add to the amount for consumption.

In the case of the day-observing section, there is no Tritēru, but the friends repair to the bank of a neighbouring tank or to some other water where the shaving and widow rites are all gone through in much the same way, after which they all bathe and then return to the house for a feast.

After the feast it is usual, something after the fashion of what is done at weddings, for the friends and relatives to signify their respect for the deceased by presenting money and other things to the Karta—grain is also brought for this purpose. This custom is really a way of mutually assisting each other in the heavy expenses of the ceremony, and it is expected that the recipients of such aid shall in like manner assists the givers on any similar occasion. This help is called *Katnam*, a word meaning dues or gifts. The way these gifts are collected is rather peculiar. After the feast is over the Dāsari receives from each one his gift, and as he takes it he holds it up above his head, shouting out that so and so has given such and such a sum in the name of so and so (the deceased); he then gives a leap up into the air and repeats some verse or other. This goes on until each one who intends doing so has presented his contributions; the Dāsari receives a fee for his trouble—perhaps a kind of percentage on the receipts. After this the Dāsari sits and tells stories until night or day light, as the case may be, when the company separate.

The reason given for all this feasting and drinking and telling of stories is that the departed spirit may be satisfied, and go away without causing any

harm to the living. They fear that if it were not satisfied the spirit might take away some one to be with it, especially one whom it had loved in its lifetime; hence the eating and drinking and entertaining stories. This may be a fit place to pause and somewhat amplify what was said at the beginning of this chapter as to the intention of this class of people, as a whole, in their funeral obsequies. As was then said, there may be some idea of benefiting the departed spirit, as we have seen to be the case with the orthodox Hindus. And there also seems to be some notion that if the departed spirit attains to heaven it may intercede for the survivors. Some notions of the kind may have been imbibed by observing the rites of their superiors; but, taken as a whole, and speaking of the mass of the people as distinct from a few of the more enlightened ones, the classes in question seem to be chiefly prompted by a desire to propitiate the departed spirit and so to prevent its doing any harm to them or theirs. They have little if any knowledge of the eschatology of the orthodox; whilst they in common with most Hindus are intensely superstitious, perhaps much more so than their more intellectual fellow-countrymen. A fear of demons and departed evil spirits is one that dominates their mind to a fearful extent, and there is little doubt but that this feeling more than any other prompts the masses of India in their funeral rites and observance for the dead generally. A residence in this and similar non-christian lands enables one to realize something of the fullness of "The glorious liberty of the children of God—the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Under such circumstances one has clearer glimpse of the meaning of the words of the prophet of Nazareth:—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (Rom. viii. 21; Gal. v. 1; John viii. 32, 36).

As with the orthodox Hindus, the Mālas have a ceremony for the dead every month for the first year after the decease, and on the last of these there is

feast something like that of the Peddadinamu; there is also an annual ceremony, of a kind, according to the ability of those concerned.

It may be mentioned that what has been herein described as the funeral rites and ceremonies of the Mālas, may also serve for those of the Mādigas or dealers in skins and leather; there are of course minor differences, but substantially their ceremonies are the same.

This description will also be sufficient to give a general idea of the funeral rites of most of those castes or tribes who, though not regularly included within the pale of the Brahminical religion, still to a certain extent perform in an illegitimate kind of way rites and ceremonies of evidently Hindu origin; these at the same time being mixed up with those from undoubted purely pagan sources.

Having no personal knowledge of the death ceremonies of tribes totally, or almost so, unconnected with Hinduism, I have consulted a few of the Government District Manuals for information on the subject, and the remainder of this chapter is chiefly from these sources. That of the Nilagiri District by the late Mr. Grigg contains most interesting information which will, perhaps, answer all purposes without going any further; describing as it does a great variety of customs current amongst non-Hindu tribes.

Before referring to this book there is just one case, that of the Goundans of the Coimbatore District, which may be worth alluding to as it contains several points of interest. According to the Manual of that District, when a person is seen to be dying a four anna piece is sometimes put into milk which is then poured down the throat of the one in extremis. After death the dead body is washed and shaved, and new clothes are put on it by the nearest relatives. The funeral torch is carried by the *toty* (scavenger), but it is applied to the pile by the Karta as amongst Hindus. If the deceased were a married man, the widow *herself* breaks off her Mangalasūtram *before* the funeral and ties it round the toe of her deceased husband. Ceremonies are observed three days after

death when milk and ghee are poured over the grave, and rice and cakes are offered to the spirit; also a feast is prepared comprising some favourite dish of the deceased, which is partaker of by the relatives.

The most interesting ceremonies, however, are those of the TŌDAS as described by Mr. Grigg. At the funerals of this people a number of buffaloes are killed to supply the deceased with milk in the next world, of which they seem to have pretty distinct ideas. The *viaticum* for a dying Tōda is a drink of milk, and after death he is wrapped up in a garment into the pockets of which is placed a supply of grain and sugar &c. for use on the ghostly journey. There are two funeral ceremonies called the Green funeral and the Dry funeral. The former is the actual funeral ceremony, and the latter what answers somewhat to the Sapindi rite of the orthodox.

Very soon after death the body is carried out to the burying ground and a small herd of buffaloes is driven along with the procession; each animal has a little bell hung round its neck and they are driven close up to the funeral pile. The mourners present include women and children. Each one present takes up three handfuls of earth and throwing it upon the body says "Let him go into the soil." The rest of this touching ceremony may be best given in Mr. Grigg's own words. "The recumbent corpse is now lifted up in the arms of the relatives, and each cow in succession is dragged by two men up to her master, whose arm is raised and made to touch the animal's horns. After this the pyre is lighted by fire made by the friction of two sticks. The body is lifted up and swung three times from side to side, then laid on the burning wood *face downwards*. As the flames devour the body the people cry 'shall we kill buffaloes for you'? 'You are going to Amnúr;' (heaven) 'may it be well with you'; 'may all thy sins go.' One or two buffaloes are now killed, and as each creature falls dead from a blow from the butt end of an axe the people crowd round it, sobbing and lamenting and kissing its face. After this they sit round the bier in pairs with their faces together and their foreheads

touching, weeping bitterly and wailing in true oriental fashion."

The skull and bones are preserved for the Dry funeral. There is no religious ceremony at the cremation nor is it necessary for any priests to be present.

The Dry funeral is not celebrated at any particular period after death; it seems that owing to the ceremony being a large one, involving comparatively, considerable expense, opportunity is taken for two or three Dry funerals to be celebrated together. The whole lasts for three days and the chief feature appears to be the slaughter of buffaloes—two or three for each of the dead commemorated. The carcases of the slain buffaloes are a perquisite of the Kōtas who act as musicians on the occasion. Rites are performed with the blood of one of the slain animals such as to lead one to suppose they think it some way or other, takes away the sins of the deceased. A buffalo calf is also let loose as a kind of "scape-goat" with shouts of "May he enter heaven; may it be well with his good deeds and his sins." The whole ceremony concludes as follows. What is called the *Kēd* is burnt with some ceremony. It is not explained what the Kēd is, but one gathers it is some receptacle containing the skull and bones left from the cremation, as before mentioned. In the early morning, before dawn, this Kēd is burnt, together with a miniature bow and three arrows, also a sickle, an axe, and a palm-leaf umbrella, as well as some coarse sugar and pulse, etc. Sitting round the fire the mourners wail for the dead, whilst the Kōta musicians play on their instruments. At dawn, water is sprinkled on the embers and a pit is dug into which the ashes are scraped; the whole being covered with a large stone. "Finally a dim figure enters the circle, and raising a chatty high over his head, dashes it into pieces on the stone covering the ashes, bends down, touches the stone with his forehead, and hastens away. All the others perform in turn the same prostration, and flitting silently down the hill, a procession of hurrying shadows fades into the mist, through which twinkles the distant fire of the Kēdmanei. Imagination

might easily transform them into the departing spirits of the propitiated dead."

In the chapter on Orthodox Marriages mention was made of the exceedingly simple marriage rites of the Badagas; their funeral ceremonies appear to be much more elaborate. When a person is seen to be dying, an exceedingly small gold coin is dipped in ghee and placed between the lips. If this is swallowed, so much the better; if not it is tied to the arm. This is supposed to pay the expenses of the journey to the next world. This small coin is said to be a Mysore one called a Birian-hanna or Viria raya and valued at a quarter of a rupee. After death, messengers are sent forth to call together friends and relatives, and also to summon Kōta musicians. A funeral car is erected with wood and branches of trees, all hung with cloth, and the body is placed on a cot underneath this construction. All the next day a kind of death dance is kept up; the relatives do not join in the dance but walk round the bier carrying food in their hands and repeating, with much weeping, the good qualities of the deceased. As with the Tōdas, a calf is chosen to be a kind of "scape-goat," and at this ceremony there appears to be much chanting of prayers, concluding as follows. "Let all his sins be forgiven, and may it be well with him, yea all be well." The body with the car is then taken and burnt near some neighbouring stream; the ashes being collected and thrown into the water.

The Kōtas, who act as musicians to the other hill tribes, appear in their funeral rites to copy both Badagas and Tōdas. They have the car like erection of the former, which they burn with the implements of the deceased. They also have a kind of Dry funeral in imitation of the latter, when skulls are placed on cots and burnt, together with bows and arrows, and various other implements.

The Kūrumbas, another tribe described by Mr. Grigg, appear, when they can afford it, to administer the small gold coin to their sick when dying, in imitation of the Badagas; and they also place the body under a kind of car, hung with cloths. After danc-

ing round the car to the sounds of music the corpse is burnt with the car and the ceremony is complete.

The Irulas, whose simple marriages we have already described, appear also to have very little by way of ceremony in the manner of disposing of their dead whom they bury. The body is placed in the grave in a sitting posture, with a lamp by its side; the friends dance round the grave for sometime, after which they fill it up and place a small upright stone to mark the spot. There appears to be no other funeral ceremony than this amongst these people.

These instances are given as they seem to be representative of the various funeral rites of the non-Hinduised tribes of South India; and, as such, they may, perhaps, be, to a certain extent, representative of other parts of this vast country.

The three chapters on funerals may possibly be thought by the ordinary reader to be somewhat gruesome reading; but, perhaps, nothing serves better to illustrate the religious ideas of a people than a study of the mode in which they dispose of their dead, and their funeral rites generally. If the object in view is to learn something of the inner life of the people of India, these chapters may serve to assist in so desirable and interesting a study; and this being the case, it is felt that no apology is needed for dwelling in such detail, upon what must always, necessarily, be a melancholy subject.

# CHAPTER XIX.

## HINDU OMENS.

### शकुनम्. (Shakunum).

Neither by explaining omens and prodigies, nor by skill in astrology and palmistry, nor by casuistry and expositions of holy texts let him (a Sannyāsi) at any time gain his support. (Manu vi. 50.)

On omen is defined to be an occurrence that is supposed to portend, or show the character of some future event, or any indication, or action regarded as a foreshadowing. The belief in omens has existed in all ages and countries, and traces of it still linger in the most civilized and enlightened communities. This being the case, it is not to be wondered at that such belief pervades all classes in India, though probably, outside nations have little idea of the extent to which it dominates the every day life of the people.

The traveller, even the most unobservant, cannot fail to be struck with the peculiar objects, some most grotesque, and some even most obscene, that are put up in gardens and fields to protect the crops from the evil eye. It is with the object of protecting her child from the same baleful influence that a mother will deck it with some charm or some peculiar ornament. The inexpressibly obscene figures also that are sometimes seen over the gateways of Hindu temples, are placed there from the same motive—to protect the temple and its contents from the evil eye. Such superstitions too, as a belief in the good or evil influence of certain stars, or the conjunction of certain planets have wonderful hold upon the Hindu mind of every rank and station. Such things, too, as the supposed influence of certain numbers is one very largely believed in by the people generally; odd

numbers are thought to be lucky, whilst even numbers are unlucky; so, for instance, it because a matter of very great anxiety to a candidate in any public examination whether his number in the list of candidates should turn out to be an odd or an even one. The good or evil influences of certain gems, also, is so strongly believed in that knowledge on the subject has come to be a science! There is a book which treats of the nature of precious stones, and, amongst other things describes these which are lucky, and those which are the reverse; telling also the probable results of wearing the same. There is a verse bearing upon this in Mānava Dharma Sāstram which is as follows:

> Together with all his food let him swallow such medical substances as resist venom; and let him constantly wear with attention such gems as are known to repel it. (vii. 218).

Any one who has had occasion to sell a horse to a Hindu will have noticed with what care the animal was examined to see if it had certain marks. These marks are not, as one might suppose, signs of breed or soundness; but certain configurations of the hair, showing whether the animal is a lucky or an unlucky one. The position and number of certain natural twirls, or twists in the hair, are taken as indication of the real value of the animal; a horse with unlucky marks is thought to be certain to bring misfortune, and hence it is very difficult to sell one to a Hindu that may be deficient in these so called marks.

These and numerous similar things which might be alluded to, serve to show how superstition ridden is the Hindu, even in these days of intellectual progress; but the subject of this chapter has not to do with such things generally. Omens, as meaning things regarded as foreshadowing events, is the particular subject here intended. The Sanskrit word used for an omen at the head of this chapter, is *Shakunam* which means primarily a bird, and comes to mean an omen from the fact that in ancient days omens were largely decided by the flight of birds. This also, as is well known, was a feature in the auguries of the

ancient Romans. Ancient Hindu writings contain passages referring to portents and omens, and the passage quoted from Manu at the head of this chapter, does not mean that the art, or science of explaining omens is a disreputable one, rather the contrary; all that it means is that a Sannyāsi being one who is supposed to have finished having anything to do with sublunary affairs generally, must not, for the sake of acquiring gain even engage in what are ordinarily considered sacred employments.

A knowledge of omens is considered an art or science amongst the Hindus generally, and there is a book in Telugu, translated from the Sanscrit, upon this subject. The three divisions of this book are Palmistry, (*Sāmudrikam*), or the interpretation of spots on the body and of creases in the hands; Enquiry (*Prashnam*), or divination tried by dipping the hand into the Rámáyanam; and Omens. There is a class of people who are learned in omens and kindred subjects; the chief of these are the Astronomers or Astrologers (*Jyotishka*) who, as their name implies, are learned in the stars and occult matters generally. I have a copy in Telugu of the Shakuna bhārgam, or the part on omens of this book, and perhaps the simplest thing to do will be to go through the book and freely select specimens of the various things there in enumerated as being ominous. The first we will notice are:—

## OMENS ON SETTING OUT ON A JOURNEY.

There are no less than forty-three different things enumerated as prognosticating good and thirty-four evil if any of them should happen just on setting out for a journey; for instance, to overhear a pleasant conversation, or to hear musical instruments, or to see a good blaze of fire; to meet a company of dancing girls, or a few young women; to meet an elephant, a horse, or a bullock, or even a corpse; to meet two Brahmans, or four Komaties, or a Sudra with a stick in his hand; to see in front of one flesh

or umbrellas, fans, mirrors, a harp, diamonds, gold, weapons, fruit or flowers; to hear the braying of an ass from the east, south, north or north-east; if there passes from the left to the right, a crow, a parrot, a stork, a heron, or a jackal; if there passes from the right to the left a brahminy kite, a hawk, an owl, an iguana, a deer, a muskrat, a dog, or a mungoose; if a lizard's cry is heard from the right, or from overhead; any of these are considered good omens, and augur well for the journey.

It seems strange that, for instance, to meet a corpse, should be a good omen, but it is the case; moreover to dream of a corpse is considered a lucky thing; also to dream of a blaze of fire, or of flowers, or fruit is good; or to dream of having stepped into filth, or having any filth fall on one's body, all these things are considered good omens. To dream of any thing red is bad, as red flowers, or a red cloth, or blood.

The following are considered bad omens, and foretell evil if any of them should happen to one just starting on a journey. It is a very anxious thing, therefore, when a good Hindu leaves his home to start out for a journey; he will naturally look and listen carefully for some good sign, and be very thankful if he should get away without any baleful prognostication. A pandit friend tells me that there is no definite distance laid down beyond which bad omens have no effect; perhaps twenty or twenty-five yards or even less, may be considered enough as a test; or getting out into the main street, if the house started from should be in a side street; after this it would not matter much if any thing of the nature of a bad omen were to happen. The setting out therefore is the anxious time. It is a bad sign if any one should try to persuade the departing traveller not to go, or should say he had better take some food before starting, or should offer to accompany him, or should enquire as to where he is going, or should pull his garment to keep him back. It is considered a bad omen on setting out, to meet, or to see before one any of the following:—A woman with plaited red hair, a widow, a new pot, a whirlwind, drops of rain

a bundle of firewood, a single Brahmin, an oil-monger, a pariah, a lame man, men quarrelling, men in suffering, men with dishevelled hair, a hunchback, a leper, invalids, buttermilk, oil, empty pots, grass, bones, a bundle of dirty clothes, smoking fire or various other things which are mentioned. It is not a good sign to see an ass either to the west, the north-west, the south-west or the south-east with its head hanging down and braying; or to see a crow, a parrot, a stork, a heron, or a jackal pass from the right to the left.

If any of the above bad omens were to manifest themselves to a pious Hindu on setting out on a journey, especially if the journey were an important one, he would certainly turn back home again. On entering his house he would carefully wash his feet and then perform *Achamanam,* which is sipping of water three times repeating the words Kēshava Svāha! hail Krishna, Nārāyana Svāha! hail Nārāyana, Mādhava Svāha! hail Mādhava—these being names of Vishnu. The ceremony of Achamanam is necessary before any religious ceremony, or before or after meals, as well as at various other times. After this, and spending a greater or less time in quiet meditation according to the urgency of the case, the traveller would again set forth. A succession of attempts meeting with bad omens would be enough to defer a journey entirely for the day, if not altogether. If the traveller were a Sudra he would not be able to repeat the above words on performing his Achamanam, they are from the Vedas, and none but a twice-born must take such holy words within his lips; the Sudra would sip the water and say Gōvinda! Gōvinda! or Siva! Siva! as the case may be; that is whether he were a Vaishnava, or a Saiva—a worshipper of the god Vishnu, or of the god Siva.

## SNAKE OMENS.

In a country like India where serpent worship is so common, it is not to be wondered at that the move-

ments of these reptiles should be looked upon as ominous. Serpent worship is a cult that seems to have been prevalent, at sometime or other to a greater or less degree, amongst most races of mankind; nor is this to wonder at. Apart from the terrible connection of the serpent with the human race in the garden of Eden—an account of which, has, doubtless, filtered through the legends of most branches of the human race—there is something in the appearance of the reptile itself, and in its habits, that readily account for the superstitious feeling it inspires. There are those who can see beauty in the bright-coloured markings, and sinuous movements of the serpent; but there are very few whom the habits and appearance of these malevolent looking creatures do not inspire with instinctive disgust and abhorrence. The vital statistics of the Indian Government show an annual loss of life by snake bite alone, averaging from twenty to twenty-five thousand; it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the serpent should inspire a dread making it but a step to propitiatory worship, and hence a natural subject for omens.

In the book of Shakunams before alluded to, the following are the snake omens mentioned:—To see two snakes fighting is said to denote a quarrel between the beholder and his relatives. It also forebodes poverty to one who sees two snakes making off in the same direction. One snake swallowing another is a sign of famine. It is a good omen to any one who sees a serpent climbing up a green tree, he is sure to be an emperor. It is a sign of coming misfortune to a king if he sees a snake climbing down from a tree; but the same thing is to other than kings a good omen. The entrance of a snake into a house denotes wealth to the householder; but it denotes just the reverse if it is seen departing from a house. If a cobra is seen with its hood expanded and its tail erect, going across from the left to the right, it is a good sign; if only its hood is expanded as it thus proceeds, it denotes a good meal for the beholder. If a snake goes away without making any attempt to turn back, it is a good sign; if it should

start straight off from one's side, it denotes poverty. If a snake comes towards one from the right side it foretells success; but it is a bad sign if it should come towards one from the left. If one sees a snake crawling about in the road in front of him, it denotes success to his projects; but it would be evil if he should therefore make a halt. If when the snake sees anyone it should expand its hood and erect its head, it foretells wealth and prosperity; if when it sees him it crawls into its hole, it denotes wealth to the poor, but poverty to the rich. To see a dead snake lying on the ground foretells news of death. Should a farmer on arriving at a field see a cobra with hood expanded and head erect, it would show that the field would yield a good crop; but if it should crawl away on seeing him, it would denote a bad crop. It is a sign of a good crop if a cobra be seen with hood expanded and head erect when the farmer is sowing his seed. A snake crawling into the entrance of a village, denotes good to the villagers; but it denotes evil to them if one should be seen running away from a village. To hear a serpent hiss on entering a village is a good omen; it is bad to hear one hiss when on a journey. If one were to see the trail of a snake on the ground, he must walk backwards along it, rubbing it out with his foot.

## LIZARD OMENS.

There are two ways in which a lizard is supposed to exercise a good or an evil influence, and these are its cry and its falling upon any one. With reference to the cry of a lizard it is said that if on entering a town one hears a lizard's cry coming from the left hand, it denotes prosperity; but if it should be heard from the right, it bespeaks delay in the accomplishment of one's designs. If the cry is heard from the front, it is a good omen; but it is bad to hear it from behind. If a number of lizard's cry out together, or if one should cry many times it is a good sign. If when one is considering about any business a lizard's cry

is heard from the right, or from above, it bespeaks well for one's designs; but it would denote disaster if it were heard from the left side.

Every dweller in India knows how universal is the ordinary lizard; it is everywhere both indoors and out. It is a very harmless thing and many of its ways are rather entertaining than otherwise; especially its dexterity in pouncing upon the insects which form its food. Many lizards too, are very pretty, and the effect is very pleasing when one sees them darting about in the sunlight, or along the white walls by lamplight. Some of them, it is true, are not so engaging in appearance; but others have most beautiful colours and markings, and their feeble little "tweet" "tweet" is by no means unpleasant to the ear, though not very musical. Everybody, too, knows the habit the lizard has of falling down with a flop, and that often with disastrous effect as to its candal appendage. In its peregrinations here, there and everywhere, up the walls, along the beams, and in and out among the rafters, seeking what it may devour, the silly thing must very often go very carelessly, or else it gets giddy from running along horizontal beams with its natural position reversed as to its legs and back. Any way it is no unusual thing to hear a flop on the floor, and to see some unfortunate lizard lying stunned, as it were, for the sixtieth part of a second, with, perhaps, its tail twirling about like a fat worm in convulsions, at some distance from its natural place of attachment. The little thing, however, is soon up again and off like a dart, as it nothing had happened. Its personal appearance is spoiled for the time, and it does not seem quite capable of steering itself after the loss of its tail; but, after all, that is no great matter, for a new one will soon sprout out again, and render its owner once more a thing of beauty, if not a joy for ever. The Hindu has very superstitious notions as to the fall of a lizard—that is if it should happen to fall on his person; and he will try all he can to prevent such a thing happening. Although under certain conditions, such a fall may be a token

of good, the chances to the contrary are so great as to make it worth while taking every precautions against such a contingency.

In the book on omens there is given a list of no less than sixty-five places on the person which may forebore good, or evil, if touched by a lizard in its fall. If it falls upon the centre of one's head, it forebodes a quarrel or disease; if on the temples, evil to one's brother; if on the front of the head, evil to oneself; if on the head covering, evil to males, death to females; if on the tips of one's hair, death; if on the right cheek, good for males, evil for females; if on the left cheek, good for females, evil for males and so on through the whole body right down to the toes, and even to the nails on the toes. For instance, if a lizard were to fall on the toes of the right foot, it would denote wealth; but if on the nails of the same foot, a quarrel; if on the edge of the nails of the same foot, annoyance, or suffering is betokened. If the fall should touch either the toes, or the nails, or the edge of the nails of the left foot, it would be an omen of wealth and good fortune.

The chapter from which these are taken concluded as follows:—Upon whatever part of the body a lizard may fall, it is the best thing to at once bathe, and having lit a lamp fed with oil, pray to a favourite god (ఇష్టదైవమును) for the prevention of any evil that might otherwise happen. To this it may be objected that the omen might be a good one, hence why always this deprecatory action. The reply to this would probably be that owing to the possible uncertainty as to the exact spot upon which the reptile alighted, it would be safest to assume the omen were a bad one, and hence the wisdom of at once providing for the possible contingency.

Separate information is given as to what may be denoted by the fall of a chameleon—the large lizard usually called a bloodsucker. Strange to say, some of these omens are the opposite of those of the ordinary lizard. For instance, if a lizard falls on the nose, it betokens disease; whilst a fall of the chameleon

on the same place foretells the cure of a disease. Enough, however, has been said to show what a very portentous creature a lizard is in the eyes of the Hindus, and to account for the anxiety they evince to prevent one, at any time, falling upon them.

## CROW OMENS.

To one at all acquainted with the Indian crow, it is not at all a matter of surprise that the ways of that wily bird are thought to be highly ominous. The very glitter of its wicked beady black eye is suggestive of evil. The Hindus think, from the peculiar squinting way the crow has of looking at a thing—turning its head from side to side in a most uncanny fashion—that it can only see with one eye at a time, but that it has the power of transferring vision from one eye to the other at will. According to this theory, one eye must, for the time, be only a dummy. As one would expect, the crow is a proverbial bird amongst the Hindus. They say for instance "The crow's chick is dear to the crow" or, as the English proverb has it, 'Even a beggar loves her brat'; "The crow is black at birth and black when grown," or, 'What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh'; "To kill crows and throw them to kites" or, 'To rob Peter to pay Paul.' Interesting though it certainly is from some points of view, and perhaps in personal appearance somewhat deserving the high sounding name (*corvus splendens*) with which naturalists have endowed him, the moral character of the Indian crow is truly of the lowest; he is a very Ishmaelite amongst winged bipeds; for cunning craftiness, untiring pertinacity, fiendish cruelty, and outrageous impudence, perhaps no feathered creature in existence is its equal —the jackdaw of Rheims would be far behind in competition, either in cleverness or in wickedness. It is, therefore, perfectly natural that the crow should be placed in the Hindu list of creatures of augury. The following are some of those mentioned in the book of omens:—

If on setting out for a journey a crow should come

in front of one and caw, it would denote the defeat of the object of the journey. If it should caw first on the left hand side of one, and then on the right it would denote that robbers may fall upon one in the way; but should it caw first on the right side and then on the left, it would foretell wealth and the accomplishment of one's designs. If a crow should caw on one's left hand, and then follow after one, it would prognosticate an access of riches; but if after cawing on the left hand, it should come towards one from the front, it would foretell difficulties on the journey. On the other hand, this last omen is good for those who are not setting out on a journey. If a crow coming towards one should caw and then goes behind to the right, it would foretell suffering from ulcers. If any one should be fortunate enough to see one crow feeding another, it would bespeak happiness to the beholder.

## DOG OMENS.

The dog of the country, the ordinary "pariah" dog, as it is called, is such a poor miserable thing that one is rather surprised to find so much space occupied with them in the book on omens. There are good dogs in India, of course, and one sometimes comes across specimens of really well-bred creatures. A thorough bred brinjari or a really good poligar, for instance, is an excellent animal and suits the country; but the canine of the east is proverbially a miserable creature, and the word dog is universally used as a term of contempt. Such terms as "a lucky dog" or "a jolly dog" with the implied strain of compliment rather than reproach, are unknown in India, and probably the same may be said for the east generally. There are, of course, expressions having the same meaning as these phrases, but there is a complete absence of any thing concerning the dog in them.

It is considered to be a good sign if a dog should come near to one with a piece of old shoe in its mouth; and it bespeaks wealth to one who sees a dog with

some flesh in its mouth. It is a lucky sign should a dog pass by with a raw bone in its mouth; but if a dog has a burning stick, or a dry bone in its mouth, it foretells death. Should a dog enter a house having a dry bone in its mouth, it would denote that the householder was in great danger of death; if on so entering it should have creepers, or ropes, or leather straps in its mouth, it would bespeak the imprisonment of the householder. It forebodes good if a dog comes from the right towards one about to start on a journey; as also if one should come towards one from the front when actually on a journey. If a dog shaking its ears should jump upon a traveller, or walk behind him treading in his footsteps, it would denote that difficulties may happen. When a dog stops a traveller in the way and prevents his proceeding it foretells that he will fall among robbers, or be stopped by enemies. If any one were to see a dog scratching itself, it would denote disease to the beholder; evil also will happen to one who sees a dog lying down with its tail cocked up. A journey is foretold to one whose shoes a dog smells (kisses); it also predicts danger from enemies, or from robbers when a dog smells one's shoulders.

If a dog scratch the walls of a house, it denotes an attempt by burglars; if it also scratch the walls of the cattle shed, it foretells that thieves will steal the cattle. If a dog should stand at the entrance of a house, and, looking in, on seeing the Master and Mistress, it should bark, it would prognosticate sickness to the Master; but if the dog should enter and holding up its head should bark, it would foretell shame to the house-wife. If one or many dogs in the middle of a village bark at the sun, it predicts evil to the country; if they should so bark in the morning, it would denote fire; if at sunset, evil to the farmers. If a dog at midnight barks towards the north, it betokens evil to Brahmins and danger from robbers. If a dog were to bark in the middle of a village and then, running to the cemetery, were to bark there, it would foretell danger of death to the head man of the village, or to one of the chief in-

habitants. If in the rainy season a dog should howl standing on the dung-heap, or on the king's palace or on the terrace or roof of a house, it would denote great rain; but if it should so howl at other times, it would foretell evil from fire, or from some contagious disease. If when there is an absence of rain in the rainy season, a dog is seen often to dive into water, or often to drink water, or throw water over itself, it would bespeak a speedy rainfall.

## CAT OMENS.

A cat is evidently not thought to be such a very portentous creature, as but little is said about it in the book on Shakunams. The following is a free translation of all that is said there:—Should a cat be in front of any one when he may be considering upon any business, that business will not prosper. If one should see a cat just on awaking in the morning, nothing he may do that day will prosper. A cat coming towards one on leaving home, shows that the object one had in view will fail. Should a cat follow one on leaving the house, the object in view will be accomplished without any hindrance. It is a good omen to hear a cat cry from the side towards the west.

## JACKAL OMENS.

There is also very little said about the jackal. This is not what one would expect considering the crafty nature and repulsive habits of that animal to say nothing of its horrible cries which are heard mostly in the night time. The jackal enters largely into Hindu fable; but very little is here said of it from the omen point of view. The following are the chief things mentioned as portending good or evil:—

It is a good omen for a traveller when a jackal crosses over from the left to the right. It is also a good portend when a jackal's cry is heard from the east, or the north; but it predicts great calamities if

one should cry exactly at midday; if it should cry from the south or turning towards the sun, it foretells evil to the town or to the army. If one jackal should cry out towards the south in reply to another, it portends an execution by hanging; if it should so cry in reply to another, turning to the west, it bespeaks death by drowning. If a jackal should be crying out so loud as to deafen one's ears, but upon another beginning to cry out it should lessen its own cry, that would foretell wealth and prosperity, and also the safe return of friends and relatives who may have gone on a distant journey.

### SNEEZING REGARDED AS AN OMEN.

It has already been mentioned, in the chapter on Marriages, that sneezing is considered as ominous, and that a sneeze at the important rite of a marriage ceremony is regarded as very unpropitious. Most people in India also know that should a good Hindu sneeze, he will snap his fingers and make some deprecatory exclamation like *chiramjeeva* (live a long life) or *shatāyussu* (a hundred years—live for) in order to avert any evil. In the book on Shakunams, the omens of sneezing are explained very fully, and advice is given as to the best means of averting any threatened calamity, or rather to make the evil omen innoxious:—

It is said that to sneeze many times denotes the accomplishment of one's desires; it is also a good sign to cough after sneezing. On the other hand it is a sign of evil to sneeze just once and then stop. One must not blow one nose immediately after sneezing, as that would be a sign of death. After a single sneeze, or if one were unwittingly to blow his nose immediately after sneezing, it were well to cease thinking about any business that might have been occupying the attention and immediately to lie down and be quiet for a time, having first expectorated; in this way the evil may be nullified. It is a good omen to hear sneezing when taking betel (*tāmbūlam*), or when about to take food, or upon

going to bed. If when thinking about some important business, one were to hear a fourfooted beast sneeze, or if such a thing were to occur when one happened to be contemplating a journey, it would be a sign of death, or some equally great calamity. It is a good thing to get up whilst sneezing; but it is an omen of delay in one's business to sit down whilst sneezing. It would be a sign that his object would be accomplished if one were to sneeze whilst holding in his hand bell-metal, copper, or gold; but it would be the very opposite, if the metal in the hand should be iron or silver.

It is good to hear young children, or infants sneeze; or to hear prostitutes, pariahs, or the lame; but it is a sign that many troubles will happen to any one unfortunate enough to hear any of the following women sneeze:—A married woman, or a widow; one who is blind, or dumb, or maimed; a washerwoman, or one of the toddy drawer caste, or a Mādiga (workers in leather) woman; a woman of the Yerukala caste (gypsies), or one carrying a burden. It is also a bad sign if on sneezing oneself, one should happen to see a woman.

There is no importance to be attached to sneezes caused by snuff, or red pepper, or a cold; nor to sneezing heard in the bazar. The reason for the latter is, probably, because the small dust in the bazar is often charged with particles of pungent articles like chillies, and spices of various kinds; this is apt to cause sneezing which is seems to be, considered unnatural, and hence devoid of import.

## BIRD OMENS.

THE INDIAN BLUE JAY.—The flight of this bird is consulted as an omen. C. P. Brown quotes the following from a treatise on omens:—పాలవరుడ తప్ప పక్షిజాతుల కెల్ల యెడమనుంచి కుడికి యేగవలయు· That is—except the Jay and the Brahminy kite, the omen for all the birds is that they should pass from the left to the right. This means that it is an auspicious sign when birds

fly from the left to the right, except in the case of the jay and the brahminy kite. In accordance with this, the book of Shakunams from which we are quoting says that it is a good omen when a jay flies from the right to the left of one, but bad when it flies from the left to the right. If it should sit in front of one, it is a good sign; if behind, it is a sign of evil. To see a jay to the east denotes evil to the beholder; to the south-east difficulties; to the south, or to the south-west, or the west it denotes wealth; to the north-west happiness; to the north, death; to the north-east, sorrow; if it should appear to one's right, it denotes health to the beholder.

THE BRAHMINY KITE.—In accordance with the above quotation from the Telugu, it is stated that for a kite to fly from the right of one to the left, denotes wealth and an abundant harvest; but if it were to fly from the left to the right it would prognosticate evil. It is said to be exceedingly auspicious to behold a kite flying from the right to the left with anything in the shape of prey in its bill; indeed it bespeaks good to those of that quarter on whatever side it may so appear. The sight of a jay, or a kite, or a jackal, either together, or apart, is said to be always propitious.

THE KING-CROW.—This is a black long tailed bird rather small in size, that is considered very clever by the Hindus. It is very swift in its flight, and may often be seen perched on the backs of cattle. Its Indian name is *bhāradvāja*. It is said of this bird as follows in the book of omens:—If it is seen in front of one it bespeaks good. If the male bird passes one from the right to the left, it foretells difficulties; but if the female so pass, the omen is a happy one; if the pair should so pass it is considered as very auspicious.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BREATHING.

The Hindus have a most curious idea with reference to breathing through the nose. They distinguish between breathing through the right, and the

left nostril. The right nostril is called *Sūryanādi*, or that of the sun, and the breath that comes through this is supposed to be comparatively warm; whilst the left nostril is called the *Chandranādi*, or that of the moon, the breath coming through this being considered as comparatively cold. There is believed to be a preponderance of breath coming through one nostril for a period of two hours, after which this preponderance changes to the other nostril. Not only so, but actions performed, or things happening during one or other of these periods are thought to be influenced thereby. A list is given in the book on omens showing what it would be well should happen, or otherwise as the case may be, during the prevalence of either the *Sūryanādi*, or the *Chandranādi*. There is said to be a book on this subject (*Svara Shāstram*); but I am not able to procure a copy. These are persons said to be learned in this science! who are consulted on occasion. It is said that at six o'clock in the morning of the first day of a certain month in the year, the Sūryanādi commences and from this, calculations can be made. Ordinarily when a man may desire to consult this oracle he will breathe hard down his nostrils on to the back of his hand, and having thus determined, to his own satisfaction, by the excess in volume of the flow of breath from either nostril, the auspiciousness or otherwise of the time, he will form a judgment thereupon and, if action is called for, he will act accordingly.

It is propitious if it should be Sūryanādi, when first marching forth for war, or when commencing any important commercial transaction. It should be at this period that the marriage bath should take place, (*mangalasnānam*) and also the ceremony at the coming together of a married pair when arrived at a suitable age (*garbhāthānam*). It is said to be well if during Sūryanādi one should take food, or be frightened, or be defeated in any way; also it is a propitious sign at the commencement of any affliction. It is also recommended that on starting out for any of the aforesaid enterprizes, one should start off first with the right foot.

It is advised to fix upon the period of Chandranādi for setting forth on a journey, or for a marriage; for first putting on new jewels, or for commencing to plough the fields; for beginning to build a house, or to plant a garden. It furthermore expresses the necessity of putting the left foot first on starting out to do any of these things.

## THE TINGLING OR THROBBING OF LIMBS OR MEMBERS.

The tingling or throbbing of the veins of any particular part of the body is also thought to be portentious; and there is a small chapter in the book omens devoted to this abstruse subject. There are no less than twenty-two parts of the body mentioned, a tingling in which is auspicious, or otherwise, as the case may be. It will suffice to mention nearly a few of these as specimens seeing that this chapter is not intended to teach the science of Shakunams! but to explain Hindu ideas on the subject:—

The throbbing of any part of the right hand side of the body is auspicious; whilst that of the left is only a little so—betwixt and between. A throbbing of the centre of the top of the head bespeaks good food; and that of the nose is also a good sign. A throbbing of the right cheek is ominous of evil coming to one from a ruler, whilst that of the left cheek bespeaks employment. It is a good thing, therefore, said a native friend, if on setting out to seek for employment one should have a tingling sensation in the left cheek. The list goes on downwards from the eyes to the lips and chin; and thence on to the shoulders, the chest and the arms, right down to the feet—the tingling of the calf of the leg foretelling the possession of jewels, and that of the sole of the foot happiness generally.

## YAWNING.

Before concluding this chapter it may be well to allude to the prevalent notions with reference to

Yawning; for though this is not properly speaking regarded as an omen, nor is it included in the book of Shakunams, it may be interesting to mention some of the very peculiar ideas on the subject current amongst the people. It is thought that when one yawns, there is danger of the life leaving the body, whether merely from the effects of the spasmodic action, or from any other cause is not clear; hence it is usual on yawning, to snap the fingers and say Krishna! Krishna! or Siva! Siva! as the case may be, deprecatory of any evil that might otherwise result. So strong in the belief that there is danger of the life leaving the body through a hearty yawn, that 'to yawn' is sometimes used as a euphemism for 'to die'. The Telugu people sometimes use the expression: — లోజీవములావలించే. That is—the lives in the body yawned; or, the spirit has departed. Should a baby yawn, the mother, or some one near who may have observed it, will snap the fingers saying Krishna! Krishna! or, Siva! Siva!

It is probable that the superstitious ideas with reference to yawning, and sneezing, too, had their origin in the fact of any spasmodic action itself being physically somewhat dangerous. This presumption is strengthened from the fact of there being a shlōkam on the subject that also includes falling down—a thing that is certainly not devoid of danger to the physical system, especially so to the elderly. It was probably an elderly man who first composed the verse, which is as follows:—

क्षुतपातन जृम्भेषु ।
जीवोत्तिष्ठांगुलिध्वनिः ।
गुरोरपि च कर्तव्यं ।
प्राणधारणसिद्दये ॥

On sneezing, falling, or yawning,
Snap the fingers and say live! arise!
It is fit even for a younger to do this to an elder
This is for the reviving.

The third line in the verse is an allusion to the

well-known impropriety of a younger presuming to bless an elder. In the three possible events mentioned, the danger is considered such as to warrant this departure from what is ordinarily considered to be fit and right. It appears that the usual practice on falling down is simply to say *chiramjeeva* (live a long life), or words to that effect, without snapping the fingers—this in spite of the wording of the above quotation.

It must not be thought that the list has been exhausted, in this chapter, of things considered by the Hindus; as omens but enough has been given to show how tied and bound with the chains of superstitions are a people amongst whom omens and auguries are so numerous. Doubtless there are many who pay little heed to the things here mentioned; but, take the people as a whole, these ideas are universally prevalent throughout the country, and they exercise great sway over the daily life of the masses. Much might be said, not only of the folly of such superstitions, but also of the material harm they are calculated to do, seeing that a fatalistic belief in impending evil may often bring about its own fulfilment by paralyzing the endeavour that might prevent it. To enlarge upon this view of the matter were, however, beside the object of these pages. The intention throughout has been rather to describe things as they actually exist, leaving all that might be said by way of comment to the natural impressions of the thoughtful reader.

# CHAPTER XX.

## HINDU ORNAMENTS.

### आभरणम्. (Ābharanam).

A wife being gaily adorned, her whole house is embellished; but, if she be destitute of ornament, all will be deprived of decoration. (Manu, III. 63.)

The passion for personal adornment is not a thing of modern growth, confined solely to this *Kaliyuga;* but, as is abundantly manifest it is a something that seems inherent in the human race in the most ancient records of mankind. The naked savage of the forest primeval is seen to deck himself out proudly in gaudy feathers, and barbarous shapes of shining metal; and the little infant of civilization early learns, as if by intuition, to fashion with its tiny fingers something to add to its personal attractions. And who shall say that this inclination is not for good, that is when confined within proper limits! It is delightful to see the little ones decking themselves out with wreaths, and garlands of the flowers of the field, as it is pleasing to see, in those of older growth, a manifestation of that innate desire to appear well before one's fellows which cannot have been implanted in the human heart in vain. Any thing that tends to make life bright and beautiful, or that adds to human happiness, is not to be condemned, or frowned down because evil is caused through carrying to excess that which, within proper bounds, is a source of pleasure and delight. It is when the low and degrading passion for mere ostentatious display creeps in, that evil begins; as also when the unworthy desire of mere possession becomes predominant in the mind eating away as a canker all worthier feeling. In such a case the innocent happiness of enjoying the beautiful becomes clouded over by what must ever hide the sunshine of real joy and true gladness.

Probably in no country in the world is the love of personal ornament so manifest as it is in India. The sight of the great princes in full gala dress is a dream of brightness and wealth; and even the lowest coolie manages, somehow, to possess a something, if it be only a silver, or even copper ring for his finger, or toe, to enhance his personal appearance. It must, however, be confessed that the Hindu carries this liking for jewels to an excess. It is a passion that, fostered as it is, acts largely as a hindrance to true advance in the welfare of the country. Money that properly circulated would add infinitely to the comfort of the individual, and the welfare of the community, is locked up, as it were, in jewels that lie as a dead weight, utterly unproductive of good, and largely a cause of anxiety. It is said that if any thing like a reasonable portion of the precious metal that is thus locked up were only put into circulation, the difficult problem as to the Indian currency would solve itself. Any little extra gain, or any little savings are almost unvariably invested in jewels. The owner is happy that on gala days he can adorn himself, or his family with so much jewellery; and he like to be spoken of as a man possessing so many rupees worth of the same. More often than not, a man's wealth is spoken of as his being possessed of so much in jewels; and this is said with bated breath when the sum is a large one. Even a domestic servant, or day labourer will have his little savings melted down and made into some ornament or other, for himself, or one of his family. Such people, when remonstrated with, will say it is a good investment, seeing that when a rainy day may come the money-lender will always make a good advance on jewels. A Telugu proverb has it:—'Jewels worn for ornament will be useful in times of difficulty.' Such people cannot be brought to understand the simplest elements of political economy the great improvement to health, and domestic happiness, if the money thus buried, as it were, were expended in bettering the often miserable condition of the house, or surroundings, or in providing better food for the family; the positive gain

that might be derived from properly laying out the money, instead of carrying it to the melting pot of the goldsmith—these are arguments that do not weigh much against the passion for jewels that seems to possess Hindus of every class and station from the highest to the very lowest. Probably this liking for jewels is chiefly fostered by the females —as will be seen further on. Hindu men do adorn themselves, in this way, more than those of western countries; but it is the women who wear the most ornaments; and it is not only her personal appearance, but her dignity, and status, amongst her friends and neighbours, that depend very much upon the amount and value of the same. When women meet at the village well or tank for a chat, amongst other things that usually form the subject of conversation, jewels are said to take a prominent place; in the same way, perhaps, as dress generally is supposed at times to occupy a large share of the conversation amongst the softer sex in western lands. In the same way as a European lady is apt to feel herself lowered in her own estimation, and that of her friends, when her wardrobe is not as replete as circumstance might demand, so no Indian lady can hold up her head amongst her friends and acquaintances, if there should be a lack in the number and value of such jewels as are thought becoming her rank and means.

As may readily be supposed, jewels are often a subject of quarrels and bickering in Indian households. If one member has more than another, the wife than the sister, or the sister-in-law, or the reverse, as the case may be, the peace of the good man of the house is often disturbed, and the household divided. This state of things has, in fact, become proverbial. There is a Sanscrit saying current which ironically expresses this as follows:—'Namaskāram (obeisance) to gold which creates enmity between mother and son'; and a Telugu proverb says:—Even though the brother-in-law has to go to prison, the elder sister must have her anklets. These things however can best be left to the imagination of the reader, who perhaps need not be reminded that human nature

is pretty much the same in all nations, only that it has different objects upon which it manifests itself, and different modes of giving expression to its cravings.

There is a saying amongst Hindus, which has been before alluded to in these pages that speaks of the necessity of some personal ornament, however small. 'There must always'—so goes the saying—'be at least a speck of gold on the person in order to ensure personal ceremonial purity.' In accordance with the spirit of this saying—whether or not with the object in view as there implied cannot be said—most Hindus do, as a matter of fact, contrive to have some jewel, however small, somewhere or other upon their person—either in the nose, or the ear, or on the arm or hand, there is generally a something of greater or less size and value. Really and truly, according to rule, a youth, until he is married (a *brahmachāri*) ought not to wear any ornaments at all; but as a matter of fact, in these days they do, and little boys are often ornamented as much, almost, as little girls. Those who have performed a *Yajnam* sacrifice, and who thereby become entitled to the proud title of *Somayājulu*, are allowed, as a mark of personal distinction, to wear a certain kind of ear-ring, also three peculiar shaped rings on their fingers; these jewels at once proclaim to the initiated, the spiritual rank of the wearer.

The liking for jewellery by way of personal adornment, is also one that has always been manifest in the east. This is probably, from the fact that in a warm climate there is not the same necessity for enveloping the person so completely in clothing as is the case in less sunny regions; and hence the more opportunity for personal display, than there would be in the case of those dressed in western fashion. We gather from the Pentateuch that, even in those early days, jewels of gold, chains and bracelets, armlets and necklets, with rings for the fingers, the ears, and the nose were in common use, as they are at this day; and it must have been a great manifestation of faith, and zeal, that led the men and women of Israel to bring so freely of their personal ornaments to be melted down, and

worked into adornment for the Tabernacle, and its sacred contents.

It would be out of place here to more than barely allude to the native workmen who, though having but the simplest tools, with wonderful skill and patience manufacture the native jewellery. The goldsmith guild, or rather caste, is a very distinct one, and there seems always plenty of work for them to do. True the workmanship is somewhat crude, and there is a want of finish, as compared with European manufacture; but it must be borne in mind that it is all hand work; there is nothing in the shape of machinery to lessen the task, or to give mechanical accuracy. Yet, what is lacking in finish is made up in beauty of design, for which Indian workmanship in the precious metals is proverbial. If a new jewel should be required, the customer does not go to a jeweller's shop and select the article, from a variety, as in Europe. The designs are well known, and the customer must take gold or silver or gems with him, and the goldsmith works up the materials thus brought. Sometimes the workman will go to the house of the customer and do the work there. Indeed some of the nobles and other men of wealth will, perhaps, keep workmen constantly employed in making, or altering, or repairing. The gold or silver that is taken to be worked up, is almost invariably in the shape of silver, or gold coins—Rupees or Sovereigns; and it can readily be understood how great a drain this must be upon the currency. What has been here said applies of course chiefly to up-country parts. In the Presidency towns there are shops kept by Europeans, or natives, where things are exposed for sale, much as in Europe; but that it is not according to the ways of the country. Sometime ago I had the pleasure of going through the workshops of a well known jeweller in Madras; one sees there, that happy combination of modern European appliances with the wonderful, patient manipulation of the Indian workman, which may probably, in course of time, revolutionize the trade of the country.

It may be worth mentioning that, as a rule, the

metal employed in Indian jewellery is good of its kind. There is no pinch-beck, or plated ware. The outer covering of gold or silver may be very thin, and the inside, mere lead; but what one sees, is pure of its kind—be it ever so small, or so thin. The gems that one sees worn by the lower orders are, however, often false; but the setting is almost invariably pure metal-gold or silver, as the case may be. There seem however, to be signs of other notions taking rise, and cheap gilt jewellery coming into vogue. Perhaps this is one of the consequences of closer relationship between the east and the west! Any way, I saw a young man, the other day, wearing a pair of new ear ornaments, each containing what looked in the distance like a fair sized diamond. There could not, however, have been much reality about either the stones or their setting, seeing that on asking him, I found he had bought the pair new in the bazaar for less than nine pence.

The variety and number of ornaments is almost bewildering; but they all have their proper names and shapes. Indian artizans do not have to rack their brains to invent novelties. There are no changing fashions, either in dress, or in ornaments. A woman can wear what once belonged to her grandmother, or to one removed very many degrees further back, for the matter of that, either clothes or jewels; and this without any incongruity, or exciting of remark. There is an ever recurrence of old patterns, improved, it may be, but the design will be the same. Of course it is in jewels for females that the variety occurs most. It may be well to go somewhat into detail in this matter, so as to give some idea, at least, of what ornamentation the human person is capable of. It must be borne in mind, however, that there may be minor differences in different parts of the country; although perhaps, in personal ornaments more than in any thing else, there is a general agreement amongst all Hindus.

Men have the ear pierced for various kinds of ornaments both the different parts of the outer rim and also the lobe. They also sometimes have the

nose pierced for a small jewel—either one of the nostrils, or the cartilaginous division between the two nostrils. They sometimes wear gold or silver beads round the neck—these, may be, are used as a kind of rosary. It is very common to wear a belt round the waist, either of silver or gold. This is often made in circular or square plates, joined together; each plate being either plain or ornamented with embossed or raised work. Even an ordinary coolie will sometimes be seen with one of these belts in silver. Men also wear bracelets on the upper arm, and also on the wrist; the latter sometimes beautifully ornamented. They wear more rings on the fingers than do the females, and sometimes the gems in these rings are very valuable; perhaps the most valuable part of a man's ornaments are the gems in his ear-rings, and finger rings. A man may perhaps have very little in the shape of clothing, whilst the lobes of his ears are ornamented with diamonds of great value. Sometimes, too, a man may have a ring on his big toe; but this latter may be with an idea of its being beneficial to his health—a toe ring being thought, by some, to benefit impaired energies.

This may be a suitable place to mention a peculiar custom that seems prevalent amongst Hindus, in the event of no child being born to a married pair for a long time, or one surviving after several have died in infancy. In such a case, especially if it be a boy, but also sometimes in the case of a girl, the parents will beg money from their friends and neighbours, or even from strangers—the money must be obtained in this way—and with what is realized, they get made a small jewel for the ear and the nose, to be worn as amulets. It must at least be for one ear and one nostril; but if sufficient is obtained to meet the cost, both ears and both nostrils are thus ornamented. When these are once put on, they are never removed; great danger would be incurred by removing these charms.

The ornaments for women are naturally far more numerous. There are no less than twelve different kinds for the head alone; probably this does not

exhaust the list, but these are those in ordinary use, either for gala days, or for every day wear. It may be worth while going somewhat into detail as regards these head ornaments. First there is what is called the betel-leaf, from its resemblance to the same. This is of gold, ornamented with little balls along its edges, and worn on the top of the head towards the front. Another ornament made into the shape of the petal of certain Indian flower (*pandanus ordo-ratissimus*) is worn just behind the above. Next comes a large circular ornament named after the Indian chrysanthemum, and worn at the end of the chignon —it must be born in mind that the chignon is worn somewhat at the side and not at the extreme back of the head. A combined kind of golden sun flower, with a crescent attached to it by links, is worn right on the crown of the head. It may be mentioned that these four ornaments are in ordinary wear by well-to-do females; those hereafter mentioned are, as a rule, only worn on gala days. A kind of inverted letter V shaped ornament, sometimes set with pearls, is worn pendant on the forehead, the angle being attached to the hair, in a line with the parting. Pendant from this, in the angle, is a kind of locket adorned with pearls. On the hair in front and just between the V shaped ornament, and the betel-leaf shaped one first described, are two jewels; the one on the right being called the sun, from its supposed resemblance to that luminary, and the one on the left being named the moon, from its crescent shape; both of these are sometimes adorned with precious stones. There is also a kind of gold buckle worn on the side of the chignon, and used to attach any artificial hair that may be necessary to make the bunch of the approved size and appearance. A small chrysanthemum shaped ornament, having an emerald in the centre, is also worn on the chignon as an additional ornament.

On great occasions, as on her wedding day, or other great gala days, a Hindu lady may have all the above on at the same time, though of course, it is not always that the whole of them are available. There are still two head ornaments to be described

that are worn instead of those on the chignon when the wearer may be a young girl. In such an event the hair will be plaited up into a long tail, hanging straight down behind, and beautified with a long tail-like ornament of gold, often set with precious stones. At the end of this is attached yet another article which consists of a bunch of gold ball-like ornaments fastened on with silk.

Those worn in the nose may also be described somewhat in detail, after which the various lists must be dismissed with briefer mention. Strange as it may seem to western ideas, the nose is a favourite feature, amongst Hindu ladies, for the attachment of ornamentation; and after many years of being daily accustomed to see such things, it does not seem in one's eyes to be any stranger a custom than the ornaments for the ears so freely worn by ladies in Europe in our younger days. Each nostril is pierced, and also the cartilage between the two nostrils and by the aid of these three holes, some or other of the following are attached to the nose. First must be mentioned a pendant from the centre, hanging down over the upper lip; the middle of this ornament has a stone of a some kind in it and pendant from that again is a pearl. Into one of the nostrils is put a kind of short pin having a head of some precious stone and with a pendant pearl. Into the other nostril may be inserted a flower shaped jewel of gold and small pearls, called the Neem, or Margosa flower, from its supposed resemblance to the same. These three jewels are in ordinary daily wear by those who can afford them, whilst the following are reserved for high days and holidays. A ring, sometimes as large round as a rupee, and ornamented with pearls, or precious stones, is worn in one of the nostrils; whilst in the other may be worn a flowerlike jewel of smaller size. A half moon shaped ornament is also attached to a nostril. Of course it would not be possible to have on all the above at one and the same time; but a fair number can be attached upon occasion.

Leaving the hair and the nose, we come to the

ears; and there are a great variety of jewels made to attach to some part or other of the aural organ. There are at least four parts of the ear and sometimes even more that are pierced to enable the various ornaments to be attached, and I have a list of at least fifteen different kinds of ear-jewels all known by different names, and doubtless there are more besides. Some are of ornamented gold, whilst others are richly set with gems and pearls, according to the means of the owner. There are those for the lobe of the ear, and those for the tip and middle of the outer rim, each place being pierced for the purpose. There is also a hole pierced in the little prominence in front of the external opening of the ear (*tragus*), which is made to serve the purpose of holding a jewel to aid in the adorning of the wearer.

Leaving the head we come to the neck; and here again the variety is very great. I have the names of some twenty-four neck ornaments, although this probably does not by any means exhaust the list. As may be supposed, the style and quality differ very largely. Some are tight bands, fitting close round the neck, and usually composed of flat gold beads or tablets strung together on silken, or other cord. Amongst poorer people the gold beads will be alternated with those of coloured glass, to eke out the precious metal. Some of the neck ornaments are loose hanging chains, whilst a very favourite neck jewel is composed of gold coins—English or Australian sovereigns, or French five or ten franc pieces, or even the old Indian gold Mohur—all strung together so as to form a loosely hanging necklace. To attempt, however, to describe these neck ornaments would occupy too much space and might perhaps weary the reader.

There are jewels for the arms, both the upper part of the arm and the wrists. Those for the upper part are like bracelets of various kinds, except that there are several varieties which have a disc, or flower like ornament, of greater or less size, attached to them. The number of these, however, is not great, but for the wrists there are fifteen or more different kinds of

bracelets worn. Some are like chains, and some are merely plain bands, whilst others are beautifully embossed in various patterns; some also are ornamented with precious stones.

In speaking of wrist ornaments, particular mention must be made of the glass bangles that are so marked a feature in female ornaments. Those who, through poverty or from any other cause, cannot obtain any jewels whatever, will, at any rate, have glass bangles. To be without these is a mark of widowhood. It is a universal rule that Hindu females, from their very childhood, should wear these glass bangles; to be deprived of them would be a great disgrace. Widows alone are prohibited the privilege of thus ornamenting themselves. A widow even may wear gold bracelets; but not glass ones. A little infant of a month old will, perhaps, have one or two glass bangles put on its little wrist by the fond mother, and the number increases with the age of the child. There is no fixed number for any certain age or conditions; it seems to be pretty much a matter of fancy and ability. Some females will have a few, whilst others will have a dozen or more, largely covering the arm from the wrist upwards. An angry woman will sometimes smash all her loved bangles before her husband's face, when they may happen to quarrel—which is not an unknown thing even in Hindu households! Such an act is as much as saying 'I would I were a widow,' and it is a very dreadful thing to do! There are various kinds of these bangles, some being much thinner and finer than others; and the price varies accordingly. Common ones will sell at about four for one anna, whilst the better class ones may be half an anna, or even an anna each. The colours, too, vary; black, blue, and green being the usual colours. As a rule, the same colours are worn indifferently by all castes—the better class people having the finer and more expensive kinds. There are however, some few varieties affected by some of the castes. The females of the cowherd caste, for instance, usually wear a peculiar kind in which the ground is black, but ornamented with green spots or streaks. The toddy

drawer caste, again, have a particular kind. Practically, however these glass bangles are the same kind worn by females of all castes, classes, and conditions of the people. In addition to the glass bangles, it is usual for coloured ones, made of lac, to be worn, two on each arm; that is, the first and last bangle is usually one of this kind—the glass ones being between. The cost of these is more than those of glass, and they are ornamented with various colours and bits of glass, so as to produce a very pretty effect. Such brittle things as the ordinary glass bangles are, necessarily, often broken, and periodically require to be renewed. The bangle-man is a well known personage, and he may constantly be met with his strings of bangles over his shoulder, the better kinds being carefully rolled up in paper and cloth, and the whole covered over with his black blanket, which is thrown over the shoulder to protect the brittle wares. The bangle-man will have his usual rounds, and he appears to be a very welcome personage. If his circuit should be a wide one, and he be a bit above the common, he may have a little country pony to lessen the toils of his journeyings. The bangles are put on by the bangle-man himself, and a very painful process it seems for the poor female. She sits on the ground in front of the manipulator, and he, also seated, tailor fashion, takes her hand in his, and begins the operation-kneading and pressing with practised fingers, and perhaps now and then soothing the sufferer by pointing out the beauty that will be the result of the pain. The wonder is, when one see the comparative smallness of the circles, how they can be got over the hand at all; but the Hindu hand is very supple, and the operator knows how to press and squeeze so as to accomplish his purpose. It is positively a painful sight to the beholder, to see the hand pressed together, all out of shape, until the palm positively seems folded up with the whole thumb in the middle—the tears perhaps running down the cheeks of the poor subject operated upon, whilst now and then a cry of pain cannot be repressed. It must be

done, however, and, like having a tooth out, the sooner it is over, and the less fuss made about it the better. The lac bangle is not put on over the hand in this way; it is cut and pressed open, and after, perhaps, a piece has been snipped off to make it the proper size, the ends are heated and pressed together, when they readily join. When a female has in this way had her bangles renewed, she will, as a wind up, make obeisance to the bangle-man and also to his stock in trade.

The ornaments hitherto enumerated are ordinarily made of gold—the glass bangles, of course, excepted. The body, or inner part of the jewel, may be of copper, or lead, especially in the larger sized ones; but silver is only worn by poor people. Account is not taken here of Lambardies, and some other gypsy like tribes, the women of which are ornamented in the most profuse, and barbarous fashion. They have dangling from their hair over their ears, full blown flower—like silver ornaments, with numerous small globular pendants, which tinkle softly like little bells. On the upper arm and wrists, they have large and heavy bracelets of brass, or ivory, or even painted wood; and their heavy brass anklets, which are hollow and contain little pellets, give out a tinkling sound as they walk along. The dress of these women, too, is quite different from that of ordinary Hindu females; it is very picturesque, and even grotesque, in its shape and material. It has also a lavish ornamentation of beads and cowry shells, which are sewn on to the close fitting jacket and bag like pockets, which dangle at the side of their particoloured skirts. Though picturesque it is all very dirty, and looks as though a change of raiment were a luxury seldom or never indulged in. Our task, however, is to describe the ornaments of ordinary Hindus, and we must not be led aside by these other than ordinary matters, interesting though they may be, otherwise this chapter may grow tedious in its very prolixity.

The ornaments for the female waist, and legs, and feet are more often of silver than gold, especially the anklets, and toe rings. A broad zone of gold, or

silver, with clasps, is worn round the waist by those who can afford it. This is sometimes ornamented with raised work, though perhaps oftener quite plain and the effect is very pleasing in contrast with the bright coloured raiment which picturesquely envelopes the figure. The anklets are of various shapes, and sizes—some circular, like the bracelets for the wrists, whilst others are formed so as to curve over the ankles. Some are chains, whilst others have attached to them a number of little globular bells which tinkle tinkle with a soft and pleasant sound, as the wearer moves about. Silver rings, of various kinds, are worn on the toes; there must always be one ring on the middle toe of one, or both feet. If through extreme poverty a silver ring cannot be obtained for this toe, then one of bell-metal will be used instead. The shape of these rings for the toes of females, differs from that of those for men, in that they are usually shaped like two or three twists of wire; hence the Telugu name for women's toe rings is *tsuttu,* which means a twist round. Married women wear a peculiar shaped ring on the fourth toe which has an embossed seal-like ornament on the top. Men's toe rings are more like ordinary finger rings, except that they are not joined underneath, so that they can be pulled open and pressed together again, when put on, or taken off.

It has been already mentioned that all the ornaments here described are not worn at one and the same time; that were an impossibility. It is astonishing however, how many jewels can, at times, be crowded on to the person. The daughter of wealthy parents is a sight to behold when dressed out for her wedding, or even when in full gala dress to receive visitors. The dress itself is not very elaborate as to quantity, or shape. A cloth or *Sāri* of some delicate material, and lovely colour, beautifully embroidered in fine gold may be, gracefully enfolds the figure; and this, together with a short tight-fitting bodice, forms the chief article of clothing, properly so called. There is no head covering other than the end of the Sāri thrown gracefully over the head, so as to conceal the face at will. The lack of variety in garments, how-

ever, is made up with the number, and value of the glittering jewels, which seem to occupy every available space, and which must, in spite of their beauty, be rather heavy and cumbersome to the wearer. So imperative is it at weddings that the bride should be decked out in jewels, that they are freely borrowed, and as freely lent by the neighbours and friends, upon so important an occasion; any danger, or loss must be made up, and one can easily imagine the troubles that sometime arise from this borrowing of valuables. There is a Telugu proverb which says:—'Borrowed ornaments cause inconvenience by their weight, pain by taking them off and putting them on, and debt if one is lost.'

Besides the evils already alluded to from the universal passion for jewels amongst the Hindus, it is a great inducement to crime. The open display of valuables is a great temptation to the lawless; and constantly deeds of violence are enacted for the sake of securing the jewels of the victim. On journies, especially in the common bullock cart of the country, and even in the railway train, robbers attack travellers for the sake of the jewels, which are foolishly worn on the person as if to tempt to robbery. In secluded places near to towns or villages, or even in the open streets, jewel-snatchers often manage, and at times with great violence, to secure valuable booty. The 'area sneak' of Europe is a type of villain, male or female, who decoys little children, and sometimes even murders them, for the sake of the jewels with which fond but foolish parents adorn their darlings. Children, sometimes without a thread of clothing, may be seen playing about, having bracelets, or necklets of value, or ornaments of some kind or other on their little brown bodies; and it is positively an inducement to crime that such a custom should be so prevalent. A dear little girl, or boy is happily playing about on or near the pial of its home. The eye of some cunning man or woman—oftener, perhaps, the latter, is attracted by the gold bracelet, or necklet of gold, or may be of gold coins. An opportunity is waited for, and the child is spoken to, and is delighted

with some glittering toy, or much loved sweetmeat which the tempter produces. Gradually the simple little thing is drawn away into the neighbouring tope of trees, or thicket of prickly pear; and then!—there is much enquiry, and searching in the house, and neighbourhood, for the lost loved one. Alas! a little body floating in the deep well, or village tank, or a mangled form hidden in the jackal-infested thicket tells but too plainly of the sad tragedy. Something like this is by no means an uncommon occurrence; and yet, in spite of such warnings, in spite of the repeated advice of magistrates when child's ornament snatchers are brought before them, the custom still continues, as is abundantly manifest any day to the passer by in the streets and throughfares of town or village.

Before concluding this chapter it may be interesting to describe somewhat, the Hindu ideas with reference to gems; as distinct from jewels of gold, or silver. In the previous chapter, allusion was made to popular Hindu superstitions on the subject of gems, and mention was made of a book, in the vernacular, dealing with this subject. A few items may be called from this book that cannot fail to interest, as showing popular Hindu notions in regard to what are lucky, and what are unlucky, in the matter of pearls and precious stones. It is an old world notion that magic properties are attached to certain gems, and this idea has been systematized by the Hindus in the book referred to. It is called 'the test of precious stones' (*Ràtna pariksha*); but the testing is largely confined, not to the intrinsic value, but the luckiness, or otherwise, of the particular gem.

Nine kinds of precious stones are enumerated, and mention is made of the particular deity, or planet with which each is connected. It is stated, moreover, that the wearer of a particular gem receives the blessing of its patron deity. Thus, Rubies are the favoured of the Sun; Diamonds, of Venus; Pearls, of the Moon; Emeralds, of Budhudu—the son of the moon; Sapphires, of Saturn; Cats-eyes, of the dragon's tail, or descending node of the moon; Topazes, of Jupiter;

Coral, of the ascending node of the moon; and the Agate, of Mars.

There are no less than six kinds of rubies enumerated, each of which is said to bring misfortune to the wearer. A ruby that has milky layers enveloping it (*lashunam*)—is said to bring poverty to the wearer; one having a broken ray (*trāsam*) in it, will cause quarrels and disputes; one chipped (*bhinnam*) will make enmity between relatives; one as though full of cracks (*patalam*), will plunge the wearer into sorrows for ever; one with many flaws (*zarzharam*), will endanger the life of the wearer; one rough and dark in colour (*karkashanilam*) will be sure to cause evils. Hence it is advised to avoid either of the above six kinds of rubies. It is furthermore said that rubies containing two or three round spots are not lucky; it is not good to cast one's eyes upon such a stone on awaking in the morning. It is most lucky to wear good, and pure rubies; the sun, their patron, will bless the wearer with wealth and prosperity.

Diamonds are divided into four classes, or castes. Those that are pure white are said to be of the brahmin jāt, and they are said to bestow great benefit upon the wearer. Those that are red, are of the kshatriya jāt, and they bestow upon the wearer the power of eliciting the obedience of his fellowmen. Those that are yellow, are of the banyan jāt, and they bestow prosperity generally. Those that are black, are of the sudra jāt, and they mean ruin to the wearer. It is further stated that when a diamond contains shining streaks resembling the feet of a crow, it will cause the death of the wearer. A good diamond cannot be broken with a hammer; it will not sink in water; and it will be pure white when polished. If such a gem be worn, Venus, its patron, will bless the wearer with the comforts of life.

Pearls.—There are said to be nine places in which pearls are found. (1) In the clouds; this kind is said to be oval in shape, and to be worn by the gods. (2) In the head of a serpent; these are said to be like a small red seed, and to have the quality of relieving their wearers from all troubles. (3) In the hollow of a

bamboo; these are said to be black in colour, and to give the wearer certain attractions. (4) In a fish; these are white in colour, and protect the wearer from danger by fire. (5) In the head of an elephant; these are yellowish green like a certain seed, and should be worn by kings. (6) In a sugar cane; this kind is of a reddish colour, and is said to have the power of causing all, even kings and queens, to be subjected to the will of the wearer. (7) In a conch shell; these are said to be like a dove's egg; but they cannot be obtained by ordinary men; it requires a knowledge of mantrams, or magic, to get them. (8) In the tusk of a wild boar; this kind is red in colour, and is in size like the rēgu fruit (*ziziphus jujuba*); it will bring fame to the wearer. (9) In the pearl oyster; of these there are said to be three kinds, of a reddish a golden, or a white colour. The moon, the patron of pearls, will bless a wearer of pure pearls with fame and the pleasures of life.

Emeralds are said to be of eight classes according to their colour. These eight colours are enumerated, and then three evil marks are given. It is said that poisons have no power over those that wear a good emerald; it protects from the power of the evil eye; and it develops the mental faculties. Emeralds also have the power of protecting from the designs of foes, from sorrows, madness, internal pains, swoons and various diseases of the liver. A sure access to heaven is promised to that one who freely gives an emerald to a brahmin.

Sapphires are divided into three classes according to the depth of their colour. There are also six kinds that are said to bring evil to the wearer; such evils as quarrels with relatives, loss of children, hazard to life, certain death within a year. A sapphire is said to be purest when, if placed in milk, it gives to the milk a bluish tinge. It is then a true sapphire (*kshēraghāhi*). A sapphire is said to be electric (*trunagrahi*) when a blade of grass will adhere to it though blown upon. Such a stone is said to bring lustre to the wearer. The planet Saturn, the patron of sapphires, will bless, the wearer of a true sapphire, it is said, with prosperity and immunity from death.

The Topaz is described as having a colour like a drop of dew on a flower, and its patron deity Jupiter is said to bless the wearer with immense wealth.

Four kinds of Coral are enumerated that will cause evil to the wearer—troubles, grief, disease, and death. There are six kinds of good coral mentioned, according to the colour—that of the beak of a parrot, or of the fruit of various trees—and the wearer of such is promised the pleasures of life, and the accomplishment of his designs.

The blessing of Mars is promised to the wearer of an agate, which blessing is said to ensure wealth and prosperity.

Much might be said regarding superstitious virtues attributed to different varieties of gems in ancient Europe, as well as the various uses to which precious stones have been applied. One might also say something of the various sources from which gems are obtained, as well as give anecdotes of well known stones, and pearls which have acquired celebrity in the history of the world. All this, however, would be beyond the object intended in these sketches. The intention here has been merely to give some account of the personal ornaments in vogue amongst present day Hindus, and the mention that has been made of superstitious notions attached to gems has only been such as seemed to be naturally connected with that subject. The details given in this chapter, have, I think, served to show how strong is the passion for jewels amongst even present day Hindus, and it is not difficult for the thoughtful reader to perceive the evils resulting from this passion—evils that have already been alluded to. One of the most hopeful signs of the times is that thinking Hindus of ability, are venturing to raise their voice against this and other social evils. There is a hope, therefore, that, as reforms have begun in other directions, so, too, something may be done here to contract within legitimate bounds that spirit, which, though innocent in itself, is seen to cause so much evil and loss, when carried to such extremes as have been here alluded to.

## CHAPTER XXI.

# CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

## समाप्ति.

Action, either mental, verbal, or corporeal, bears good or evil fruit, as itself is good or evil (Manu xx. 3.)

In reviewing the various subjects brought forward in these sketches of every day Hindu life, I am reminded of the title of a certain book published many years ago. If my memory serves me right, that title was—"The Harvest of a quiet eye." I merely make this allusion because those words exactly express the habit of observation of which this small volume is an outcome. Subjects kindred to those which form the theme of these sketches have always had for me a peculiar fascination. In a country like India the objects of interest to the observing mind simply abound on every hand. The Fauna in its countless multitude and diversity attracts most attention from the sport loving European; whilst the Flora in its infinite variety and beauty is an endless source of delight to the Botanist. India has been called the paradise of the Botanist. One may sit down on the green and within one or two square yards gather a delightful miniature bouquet of the most exquisitely beautiful flowers—all most minute in size and yet each a perfect study in itself; whilst on the other hand we may see great forest trees resplendent with a profusion of the most gorgeous bloom perfectly bewildering in its beauty and overpowering with its fragrance. The medical student in search of simples need not go far to fill his wallet with plants possessing every variety of curative quality—or the reverse, as the case may be. In a short forenoon he may gather enough to serve as remedies for a good many of the ills that flesh is heir to, or he may on almost any rubbish heap or in any neglected corner collect enough deadly poison to dispose of far more enemies than many a round of shot and shell with all their terrible destructive

power. The Entomologist need not go farther than his own garden, or even than his own dinner table, to find specimens more than sufficient in number and variety to employ all his leisure. The birds, the reptiles, the shells and the fishes in all their distracting multitude and diversity, invite the attention of the student of nature; indeed to the Naturalist, in the widest meaning of the word, there are endless objects of interest on every hand, turn which way he may. All this, to say nothing of the wide fields for scientific investigation that are here so plentifully opened out to the lover of antiquity—such dry-as-dust matters as Archaeology or Numismatology with many another kindred science—kindred in their connection with antiquity as well as in the fascination their study exercises over some minds. For such, whilst the pursuit of knowledge is under difficulties in England simply from the lack of instances upon which to exercise their faculties, here examples may be found in profusion merely for the seeking of them. I have seen heaps of celts, for instance, accumulated by a collector of such things, and have inspected a freshly opened out Buddhist mound, with the relics of which it had just been rifled; these and such like things enough to excite almost the adoration of some who give their minds to such matters may here be found in plenty by any careful enquirer. Dull indeed must be the mind of that man who can spend much time in such a country without fixing upon something or other to occupy his leisure, and wherewith to form a hobby upon which to exercise all the intellectual power he can spare from his regular and official duties.

For my own part, however, I am inclined to agree with the Poet-philosopher in his dictum that "The proper study of mankind in man," and although there is much that is delightful and profitable in the pursuits above alluded to, forming as they do pleasant and refreshing occupation for hours of relaxation, there is I think if possible more pleasure to be derived from studying the habits and customs in their infinite variety and detail, of the exceedingly interesting people by whom we are surrounded in India. The stranger

on first arriving in the country is apt to be very much interested with the sights and scenes around him— things so foreign to what he has been accustomed to in his own country; but it is astonishing how soon the novelty wears off and how capable one is of getting thoroughly accustomed to such things without in the least knowing any thing as to their origin or meaning. Apart from the pleasure of such a pursuit, there is also much profit to be derived from acquiring a knowledge of the manners and ways of other nations, especially when it is, as in this case, a people with whom we are so intimately connected. Any little trouble is I think amply repaid if by careful enquiry and observation any thing like a correct knowledge can be arrived at with reference to such matters. Speaking as a missionary, I feel it is most important to get oneself acquainted as much as possible with these things; seeing that it is impossible to be thoroughly 'in touch' with a people of whose social and religious habits and customs one may know but little or nothing. To some, the labour of acquiring such information may be somewhat irksome; the result, however, is surely well worth the effort if there be the desire to influence and direct the natives of India. A knowledge of the daily life of the people aids in arriving at more or less correct conclusions as to their modes of thought and motives for action; and it is only with the aid of such knowledge that one can reasonably hope to attain much result in influencing them in such a deeply personal matter as religion.

I confess it is to me a mystery how little the ordinary European in India troubles himself about the every day things connected with Hindu religions and social customs. Even men of thought and culture, who consider no effort too great in the endeavour to acquire correct knowledge concerning the manners and customs of the peoples of antiquity for instance, will be content to go on in a state of profound ignorance as to the habits and modes of thought of those with whom they are brought into daily contact. Probably but comparatively few of the Europeans domiciled of India could give any intelligent account of many in

the every day things alluded to in these pages. Why, for instance, the Hindu wears a few strands of cotton thread over his shoulder and across his chest; or why he shaves his head leaving a top-knot most carefully preserved; or why, again, he paints those peculiar marks upon his forehead and for what reason they vary amongst different people. If questioned as to the latter he might just give the ordinary European explanation that they are "caste marks of some sort or other"—not knowing, and possibly not caring to know, that they have nothing whatever to do with caste. Or again, except certain general and somewhat vague notions, but little is known about such social customs as perpetual widowhood, or the so great desire for a son that one must be adopted at all hazards if nature denies the precious boon. And yet there are reasons for all these things—reasons so important and so binding upon the orthodox Hindu that to neglect them were to imperil, not only his social status, but also the safety of his very soul.

It may be pleaded in excuse that the Hindus themselves really know very little as to the reason why, of by far the most of their customs and ceremonies; and occasional allusion has been made to this in these chapters. A learned pandit will know all about the rites and ceremonies of his own particular sect, but he will readily express ignorance, an ignorance that is evidently not feigned, of those connected with other branches of the many sided Hindu religion. It seems never to have occurred to him that it would be interesting to examine into those things in which he may not have a personal interest, and he is content to go through life in comparative ignorance of the doings even of his nearest neighbours. This is the case not only with the old fashioned pandit, but even more so with otherwise well informed Hindus of modern education; perhaps this may be because the Indian University has not yet included such matters in its curriculum. Be this as it may, it is a fact that even amongst the educated classes, for we are not here speaking of the illiterate masses, there is a general ignorance concerning the rites and customs

which they, nevertheless, undeviatingly perform and follow. Of course this makes it the more difficult for the outside observer to obtain correct information as to Indian habits and customs.

I have already said that from a missionary point of view the acquisition of such knowledge as is here alluded to is imperatively necessary if there is much to be looked for in the shape of real influence with the people; perhaps it would not be going out of our way to add that such a study may not be unworthy also of others than Missionaries. The noble work which Great Britain has before her in this country will never be fully accomplished until the people of the land get to realize that the Government in its actions is moved by a desire for their true welfare. I think it does not need much by way of demonstration to convince any thinking person how greatly the beneficent intentions of the supreme Government may be retarded, and even frustrated, by a cynical indifference on the part of its representatives to the every day life and the manners and customs of the people. Europeans who have had most influence in the country have always been those who have manifested a sympathy with the lives of those with whom they have been brought in contact. Such men have been able to exercise untold power in the desired directions, because the people knew they had their welfare at heart, and they trusted them accordingly. Such sympathy, however, can only result from a more or less intimate knowledge of the people and their ways. Strongly entertaining these ideas, I trust the hope is not a presumptuous one that even so small an effort as this may serve, to some extent at least, towards disseminating and popularizing a knowledge of the every day things of Hindu life. And this as I have already said not only amongst Missionaries, in whose efforts I am necessarily most interested, but also amongst others who have a share given to them by God, whether they personally recognise it or not, in carrying into effect His gracious designs towards this great country.

Looking, however, beyond India to possible readers

in England, I venture to hope that this book may be found useful and entertaining reading at such gatherings as Mission working parties and thus be a means of exciting increased interest in India and its people. I am also not without a hope that the information herein contained may find a somewhat wider range of readers in England. Such a result as this were well worth desiring, seeing that, after all, the British public is the ultimate director of the destinies of India and, therefore, a wider spread knowledge of India and India's millions amongst the English people must tend towards forming a public opinion that cannot fail, directly or indirectly, to have a reflex influence beneficial to this country.

There is one thing that may perhaps in conclusion be referred to at more length seeing that it is something which is so clearly exemplified in these detailed descriptions of peculiar rites and manifold ceremonies, I mean the exceedingly conglomerate character of the Hindu religion. I am aware that this is touching upon a somewhat trite subject and one that has been written upon by others better qualified to give expression to it; but seeing that these sketches may come into the hands of some who have not the opportunity of reading more learned works, it may not be out of place here to make a few observations on so interesting a topic. The Hinduism of the present day is by no means the religion of the Aryans as they brought it with them into India. It is a mixture in which the new so absorbed and assimilated the old with which it came in contact, and was so influenced by it, as to have become, at least as far as the outward expression of it is concerned, a very different if not, in some respects quite a new religion. This is naturally more perceptible in Southern India where the Aryans seem not to have penetrated in such large numbers as to allow of their religious system overpowering the old cults which they found flourishing there. In these Southern parts, amongst large sections of the community, the so called Hinduism of to-day is more Dravidian than Aryan in its ulterior origin. Mr. Mayne in his well

known "Treatise on Hindu Law and Usage," speaking of Hindu law, makes some remarks that may well be applied to the Hindu religion. He says:—When the Aryans penetrated into India, they found there a number of usages either the same or not wholly unlike their own. They accepted these, with or without modifications, rejecting only those that were incapable of being assimilated, such as polyandry, incestuous marriages and the like. The latter lived on a merely local life, while the former because incorporated among the customs of the ruling race. . . . . . . . . . I think it is impossible to imagine that any body of usage could have obtained general acceptance throughout India, merely because it was inculcated by Brahmin writers, or even because it was held by the Aryan tribes. In Southern India, at all events, it seems clear that neither Aryans nor Brahmins ever settled in sufficient numbers to produce any such result. We know the tenacity with which Eastern races cling to their customs, unaffected by the example of those who live near them. We have no reason to suppose that the Aryans in India ever attempted to force their usages upon the conquered races, or that they could have succeeded in doing so, if they had tried (I. § 5. 6).

It is not difficult to see how closely what is here said of the legal aspect of the case, applies to the religions. Hinduism is but a reflection of the mixed character of the inhabitants of India—not one race but many and each with its own peculiar characteristics. The history of Brahminism in this respect very much resembles that of such invading tribes as the Huns and Goths in their contact with ancient Europe—here, where able to effect it, ruthlessly destroying; there, assimilating and incorporating until ultimately they became so changed by the influences around them as to be more like those they supplanted in power than their former selves. Aryanism undoubtedly brought great religious changes, but it gradually settled down to accommodating itself to circumstances. What it could not break down it incorporated, and yet so managed that the Brahmins

should ever occupy the seat of authority; the outcome being the Hinduism of to-day. Nothing exemplifies this more clearly than the history of Buddhism. Gautama the son of a petty prince somewhere on the confines of Oude and Nepaul founded a religion in the 5th or 6th century B. C. that spread over India with such irresistible power as to threaten the extinction of Brahminism. This overwhelming force being met in that accommodating spirit of compromise which is the characteristic of Hinduism, it was finally itself absorbed into the all embracing system; Gautama Buddha was elevated by the astute Brahmins to the position of the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, and Buddhism as a distinct cult became, practically, extinct throughout the length and breadth of the land.

In concluding I may perhaps be permitted again to allude to the grounds for hope one may so clearly perceive in the religious disposition of the Hindus. To those desirous of the spiritual good of these people, their intensely religious nature which is so apparent in every page of this book is full of encouragement. None but a people with the strongest religious instincts could possibly have borne for so many ages the accumulated burdens prescribed by their religions; and when the tide, which is now so perceptibly on the turn, begins to flow freely with its irresistible and ever increasing force, and the conglomeration of Aryanism and Brahminism, Buddhism and Demonolatry, the highest philosophical conceptions and spiritual aspirations together with a pandering to the lowest instincts of human natnre—all of which, combined, form what is called Hinduism—when this shall have given place to a simpler ritual and the purer faith of the one true incarnation, then will the religious life of India assume a form that one can even now begin to contemplate with joyful anticipation.

" For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down
" of the same shall my name be great among the Gentiles;
" and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name,
" and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the
" heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.— *Mal. i.* 11.

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